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Egyptian Teachers' Conceptions of Sexual Harassment Prevention Within Schools and Through Education

Master's Thesis

Master's Degree Programme in Education and Globalisation

2021

University of Oulu
Faculty of Education
Egyptian Teachers' Conceptions of Sexual Harassment Prevention Within Schools and Through Education (Naela Elmehrek)
Master's thesis, 128 pages, 4 appendices
May 2021

Sexual harassment is a prevalent issue facing 98% of girls and women in Egypt. In July 2020, Egyptian society has witnessed a forceful women's movement against sexual harassment, after the Instagram account @AssaultPolice was created to expose harassers and pursue justice for victims. To shed light on harassment in schools, @AssaultPolice shared stories by students about their experiences with sexual harassment. Schools have a responsibility of sexual harassment prevention (SHP) by ensuring the safety of its environment and educating towards social change. The focus of this thesis is the teachers' conceptions of SHP in schools. Since they spend significant time with students, facilitate learning, and contribute to school culture, teachers have the potential to prevent sexual harassment.

To form a holistic understanding of the topic, the literature reviewed describes the Egyptian context of sexual harassment, feminism and sex education. Moving from local to global, international literature about sexual harassment as gender-based violence, sexual harassment in schools, and different levels to SHP at schools are explored. The theoretical framework includes the concepts of feminist pedagogy, anti-oppressive pedagogy, role theory for teachers as change agents, and school culture as an implicit curriculum. Phenomenography is used where the conceptions of 14 Egyptian teachers are collected through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the interviews led to an outcome space that presents the teachers' conceptions on SHP with regards to their role, the surrounding environment, and ideas for practice in the future.

The findings show that the teachers' awareness of sexual harassment lacks connection to broader issues of gender inequality. Teachers perceive their role in SHP as a safeguarding responsibility rather than a step towards enacting social change. Teachers educate for SHP by following the school's guidance, or by independently following their values. Some teachers demonstrate acts of feminist pedagogy instinctively, without recognizing it as pedagogy. Teachers are skeptical of actualizing their change agency beyond the school's interest in change. Finally, teachers believe in the value of sex education but have concerns over its feasibility. This thesis contributes to the work exerted towards achieving the UN SDGs 2030 in Egypt through quality education, gender equality, reducing inequalities and peace and justice in schools. This thesis adds to the field of research on gender in education in the context of Egypt. The context as a central aspect of this thesis is useful for future researchers, policymakers, and educators in designing programs and policies that are relevant and sustainable.

Keywords: sexual harassment prevention, education in Egypt, phenomenography, teachers, schools, gender and education, sexual harassment in Egypt

Acknowledgement

I dedicate this thesis to Egyptian girls and women who speak up against sexual harassment with courage to change our world. I also dedicate it to teachers for doing the best they can for their students by wearing many hats every day.

Writing this thesis has been the conclusion of an exciting and transformative two-year experience with EdGlo. I would like to thank the faculty and my EdGlo'19 peers for the engaging discussions and heartwarming memories. I want to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Audrey Paradis, for being so encouraging and incredibly generous with her time and tangible feedback throughout the research process. I also want to thank my co-supervisor, Sharanya Menon, for her thought-provoking questions and advice.

I would like to thank my beloved family and friends who supported me throughout this master's programme. Finally, a special thank you to my mother, Heba, for always cheering me on, providing endless love and all kinds of support.

Contents

1. Introduction

It was in July of 2020 when Egyptian women raised their virtual voice on social media condemning their normalized reality of sexual harassment. Gender-based violence and sexual harassment of women are prevalent issues in the modern Egyptian society, and school settings are no exception nor immune from the phenomenon. One Instagram account *'@AssaultPolice'* which exposes harassers and educates on violence against women in Egypt, was created to expose the case of serial harasser Ahmed Bassam Zaki. This individual was imprisoned in July of 2020 for harassing over 50 teenage girls and women while he was studying at different high schools and universities. Shortly after Zaki's case was publicized, @AssaultPolice prompted its followers (330,000) to share their experiences with sexual harassment at schools. Within two weeks, the account received about 190 responses from victims of sexual harassment which occurred in schools by peers and teachers. Many of the stories shared criticized the school's response, as well as its environment for enabling the harassment in the first place. The movement has thus shed sudden light on sexual harassment at schools and how educators contribute to it. Through this thesis, I plan to discuss the role of teachers in regard to sexual harassment occurring within schools and society at large.

The lack of similar research, the current conversation around sexual harassment in Egypt alongside the transnational #MeToo movement inspired the topic of this research. The #MeToo movement, which started in 2017 to expose harassers and sexual crimes in the United States, quickly grew into a global movement (Burke, 2021). In addressing those who perceive themselves as neither victims nor perpetrators of sexual harassment, Wozolek (2020) suggests that each person is involved with the #MeToo movement through their position of power and a shared responsibility to learn and participate in the discourse. The discourses around the #MeToo movement have started important conversations about consent, power dynamics in relationships, and rape culture. The #MeToo movement, according to Wozolek (2020), offers a potential to become a curriculum in itself, which different actors, including teachers and students, can engage with to unlearn and relearn about harassment and rape culture. Inspired by Leach and Mitchell (2006), I aspire for this thesis to bridge the distance between research and social change activism. Through academic engagement with the topic of sexual harassment prevention (SHP) in schools, I consider this work as theorized activism, and a contribution to the movement. This thesis will be accessible for the reference of interested policymakers, researchers, and it will be shared with the teachers who participated in this research.

According to a United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women report, 98% of women in Egypt have experienced physical or verbal sexual harassment (Ebaid, 2013; El Deeb, 2013). Sexual harassment lacks a unified definition due to its several subtle and explicit forms and according to the victim's ability to recognize acts of harassment, or to identify as a victim of harassment (Witkowska, 2005). Robinson (2005) shares the following definition of sexual harassment, which I regard to be in line with the qualitative orientation of this research, and comparably considers school environments:

> "any physical, visual or sexual act experienced by a person from another person at the time or later […] which makes them feel any of the following: embarrassed, frightened, hurt, uncomfortable, degraded, humiliated or compromised, which has the further result of diminishing a person's power and confidence" (p.21).

For example, sexual harassment can be recognized instantly by one person, but can take a longer time for another person to recognize it as such. Both incidents however are valid harassment experiences that require a response. While Robinson (2005) refers to actions, Leich and Mitchell (2006) complement my research's view on harassment to include verbal interactions and intangible experiences of discomfort, exposure to inappropriate content, unsolicited interaction, feelings of threat, and oppression, among other emotions a victim of harassment may feel. Such intangible experiences are of particular importance in this research, since nonphysical forms of sexual harassment at schools are more prevalent (Meyer, 2006; NCCM & UNICEF, 2015). Thus, sexual harassment in my research is understood to take physical and nonphysical forms.

Sexual harassment is not an independent phenomenon that exists in a void but is rather one of several manifestations of gender-based violence. According to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), gender-based violence is "directed against a woman because she is a woman or affects a woman disproportionately. It includes physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty," (OHCHR, 2017, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19, p.1). It is important to highlight that gender-based violence does not exclusively impact girls and women. Men, transgender, gender nonconforming and non-binary people are also victimized by sexual harassment (Leach & Mitchell, 2006). In the context of this research, however, I will focus on the experiences of girls and women. The common discourse in Egypt addresses gender in terms of girls and boys, with general denial of gender identity beyond heteronormativity (Meawad,

2020). Thus, the literature I found and explored on sexual harassment of minors in Egypt similarly takes a binary approach to gender, and engages mostly with the experiences of girls. My interest in tackling girls' exposure to sexual harassment in schools ultimately serves my purpose of addressing sexual harassment of women as a prevalent phenomenon in Egyptian society. I use the terminology of girls and women in this thesis to refer to cisgender females. Similarly, I use the terminology of boys and men to refer to cisgender males. Although addressing harassment of boys, transgender and gender nonconforming people at schools is of critical importance, it extends beyond the scope of this research for requiring different literature and research design which future research can commit to exploring.

Sexual harassment is understood as one form of gender-based violence and a manifestation of gender inequality. In the preface to *Combating Gender Violence in and around Schools*, Pinheiro (2006) states that gender-based violence is normalized even in environments that have a responsibility to protect and ensure safety, such as schools. Gender-based violence in schools can take the shape of physical, verbal, or emotional harm inflicted by a teacher on a student, between students, or by a student on a teacher, based on perceptions of gendered relations and power dynamics (Leach & Mitchell, 2006). A boy threatening to disclose a girl's private photos, or blackmailing her to receive sexual favours, or to scare her is an example of how gender inequality creates a power imbalance. The photos, if released, would result in distress for the girl, have disciplinary consequences both at home and at school, and result in the shaming and labelling of this girl within her community. Another example can be a teacher who laughs along with the class or remains quiet when homophobic jokes are directed at a student perceived to be gender nonconforming. Schools can often socialize students to adopt society's mainstream gendered, traditional, and religious ideas. Schools are also, in principle, the place where resources are allocated for future generations to become more attuned to values of social justice and sustainability (Ellis, 2004). Social justice is understood in this research as "a condition whereby all people are afforded fair opportunities to enjoy the benefits of society" (Given, 2012, p.822). Social justice is thus hindered by oppressive structures that marginalize individuals or groups. In this framework, teachers have immense potential as change-agents, with the power to contribute to social change-making. Schools as sites and teachers as individuals thus choose every day between perpetuating prevailing social norms, including oppressive gender dynamics, or becoming change-agents. Change-making can occur through adopting feminist ideas of gender equality, developing students' characters to respond to and condemn sexual harassment, and to grow into ethical, peaceful, and possibly, activist adults. Therefore, it should be a priority

for schools in Egypt to recognize their potential in improving environments for their students and combating the issue of sexual harassment in society. To achieve this goal, educational administrations, schools, and teachers need to adopt research-based SHP programs and policies that are contextual, attainable, and sustainable.

In this research, I focus on teachers, and consider them to be existing or potential change-agents. Similar to the study by Spear (2019) on teachers as change-agents, this research centers teachers as bystanders rather than perpetrators or victims, highlighting their potential to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. Teachers play an important role and have significant responsibility towards SHP in schools (Sales & Krause, 2017; Shakeshaft, 2018). Teachers facilitate learning as well as actively contribute to school culture. Teachers are also in continuous interaction with their students, and have the greatest potential in modifying harmful behaviors and changing mindsets for social change. To collect teachers' conceptions around the phenomenon of sexual harassment, and their roles in its prevention, I conducted interviews with 14 Egyptian teachers who currently work at primary, middle and high schools in Egypt. The teachers who participated in this research teach at private national and private international schools in Egypt.

Compared with public schools, private schools in Egypt are less centralized by the Ministry of Education and thus enjoy more, but not total, autonomy. Private national schools are privately owned schools which teach the national curriculum in English, French, or German language. They charge fees for a smaller classroom size and promise a more attentive experience for the learning and wellbeing of their students. International schools in Egypt serve Egyptians whose families can afford to pay even higher fees to ensure a smaller classroom size, better facilities, accredited international curricula, and highly qualified local or expat teachers. In order to teach at a private school in Egypt, which is the case for the teachers in this research, one does not necessarily have to be a graduate of the Faculty of Education, but rather must hold a university degree and appropriate language skills. The teachers, especially those teaching at private international schools, are then encouraged to attain further qualifications to justify their credibility and to satisfy international accreditation requirements. Although having public school teachers participate in this research would have been more representative of the general population in my opinion, it is important to note that the focus of this thesis is on teachers' conceptions as individual professionals, and not on their particular schools or school systems. The issue of sexual harassment and its prevention can be discussed with all teachers from all school systems. While parents may hope that by paying more tuition for their children's education at private schools, they also pay for more safety against sexual harassment, this is not always the case.

The thread of student accounts of harassment on @AssaultPolice has proved that sexual harassment is neither only present in public nor in private schools (Assault Police Instagram Account, 2020). Sexual harassment is prevalent across socioeconomic backgrounds, locating itself as an issue that should be explored in ways that can work for all schools in Egypt to ensure the safety of all Egyptian students.

Through analyzing the conceptions of teachers, and in light of the literature review and theoretical framework, I wish to academically support the design of informed teacher education programs, curricula and policies that reduce unsafe and oppressive practices. My intention for this study is to motivate an urgent call for pedagogical efforts and policies that ensure the safety of every school student in Egypt from sexual harassment. Through this research, I plan to contribute to the work exerted towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 (UN SDGs) in Egypt. While equality and social justice is an overarching theme across all UN SDGs, this research shows direct relevance to achieving goals pertaining to quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities and achieving peace and justice in institutions (goals 4, 5, 10 and 16 respectively) (Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, 2019). This research addresses two levels of SHP that can occur at schools. The first level is prevention *through education* which takes place via the education process itself and operates as a long-term social force of change (SDGs 4 and 5). The second level is prevention *within schools* which involves practical measures and policies to ensure the safety of the school environment and dictates response to harassment cases (SDGs 10 and 16).

While locating academic sources to expand my knowledge and understanding of the topic of sexual harassment in schools in Egypt, I found a dearth in sufficient relevant research. Available literature on sexual harassment in schools in Egypt is significantly limited, which can be explained by the perceived sensitivity and stigmatization of the topic. It is challenging to find or access extensive data on cases, policies, or procedures. I however utilize the limited amount of literature I found that is contextualized in Egypt in Chapter 2 ‘Locating the Research’. The sources mostly address sexual harassment of girls and women in general, with occasional reference to schools as sites of harassment, or discuss access to sexual and reproductive health education. There is also scarce research presenting teachers’ voices with regards to sexual harassment. Research that rigorously discusses sexual harassment in school settings is severely lacking as well. Available international literature on the topic of sexual harassment prevention in schools problematize sexual harassment, emphasize the school’s role and discuss different levels of prevention programs. There is however an absence of similar research in Egypt or

countries in North Africa and the Middle East. The locational context in this topic is particularly important due to the varying cultural, historical, and social factors that surround sexual harassment and all forms of gender-based violence. To inform pedagogical practice like I wish with this thesis, I aim to be context-sensitive, with a vision towards adding value and relevance for the Egyptian society as well as contribute to filling the gap in available research.

1.1 Research Question

Informed by the mentioned purpose and for the intended aims, the following research question functions as the guide for this thesis:

What are the teachers' conceptions of sexual harassment prevention in Egypt?

Through this research question, I plan to explore the conceptions teachers have of SHP as they relate to and engage with the topic. Conception in this research is understood in line with Gorodetsky, Keiny and Hoz's definition (1997), which describes it as a cognitive entity in the person's mind that is informed by beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge acquired through education and practical experiences. Conceptions can change over time as people acquire new knowledge and reflect on their practice. Through this research, I wish to present a clearer understanding of the current climate within Egyptian schools towards sexual harassment, while centering the role of teachers. Derived from the main research question, I will further explore the teachers' conceptions of their role to combat sexual harassment *through* schools, and conceptions on their role to prevent sexual harassment *in* schools, as presented in the sub-questions below:

A. How can teachers educate for SHP? *(change through education)*

With this sub-question (A), I wish to explore the barriers and opportunities faced by teachers for SHP education for social change. I wish to uncover how the teachers view their role and potential in combating the issue of sexual harassment in society through their teaching styles and interactions with their students.

B. How can schools become safe from sexual harassment? *(safety within schools)*

With this sub-question B, I want to uncover how teachers imagine an eventual safer environment for students. I wish to gather the teachers' ideas and their conceptions of barriers and potential for SHP within the school.

Phenomenography is the methodology used for this research. The variation in teachers' conceptions about their role in SHP will be compiled and analysed according to the existing literature on phenomenography. Through creating categories from the 14 interviews as data, I will highlight and compare the existing and potential mindsets for teachers to approach SHP. The choice of phenomenographic research is supported by its useful relevance to practice (Given, 2012). For example, through learning about how different teachers understand their role in SHP, then teacher education programs can be modified, and school policy can be better informed. Teachers' professional development needs can be updated with renewed focus on how to better involve teachers who are unaware of their role. Concurrently, the efforts of the individual teachers who are highly engaged and active towards the topic should be utilized. Additionally, phenomenography portrays the relationship between ways of understanding a phenomenon and the approach to learning or engaging with the phenomenon (Given, 2012). This shows the value in capturing the variation in conceptions of teachers regarding sexual harassment, because it can then help understand how different teachers act or respond differently to sexual harassment or take initiatives to combat it. I argue, like Given (2012), that there is likely a relationship between understanding and acting. This relationship however is not a causal one where understanding leads to acting or vice versa. Our human perceptions and actions are "inseparably intertwined" (Given, 2012, p. 612). Our actions reflect our perceptions and feelings, while our understanding is a combined outcome of our experiences and feelings.

1.2 Positionality of the Researcher

I am a teacher with seven years of classroom teaching experience. My views on educational leadership and planning are informed by a combination of my formal education in Egypt and Finland and my teaching experience in Egypt. I view teaching to have substantial impact and value for positive change in society. My teaching philosophy expands beyond academic achievement to include social and emotional learning, development of morality, and improvement of wellbeing. As a teacher at heart, I feel comfortable to interpret the insights shared by teachers, visualize, and relate to their experiences. My worldview in the last few years has also been significantly expanded and reformed by learning in and engaging with the Education and Globalisation master's programme. I have been able to theoretically conceptualize much of the intuitions on gender that previously guided my teaching practice. As a teacher and emerging researcher, I am confident in my position towards social injustice and eager to work, and defend my work, in alignment with my values.

At the core of this research work is my motivation to proactively discuss social issues of harassment-tolerance, victim blaming, oppression and gender inequality in schools as a simulation of society that should be made safe and just. Throughout this research process, a transparent critical feminist lens will be adopted, due to the gendered nature of sexual harassment, and the anti-oppressive potential that is held within the teachers' role to combat sexual harassment. A critical feminist lens, which utilizes both feminist and critical theory in understanding a phenomenon (Howell, Carter & Schied, 1999), will allow me to examine aspects of power and social injustice.

Throughout the research, I will tackle notions of inequality and power within school settings and society at large. My position towards sexual harassment and the importance of prevention efforts at schools shall be expressed clearly and explicitly throughout the research process. It is important, as a researcher, that I establish a critical tone in relation to social injustice, discriminatory and gender-based violent practices in schools and society. I also commit to being critical of my own views and assumptions throughout the research process. Simultaneously, I hope to go beyond simple understanding and instead aim to transform and change (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016; Scotland, 2012). The change component manifests through the interactions and dialogue with participants in the data collection stage, and through presenting findings and recommendations in the discussion section. I plan to share the final thesis with the participants in addition to sharing it with my social media connections on Facebook and LinkedIn. I plan to also create a poster and a pamphlet for teachers and school leaders as an audience and capitalize on my professional network to distribute it at schools. The poster and pamphlet will address teachers' roles in SHP, provide data and concepts to support their pedagogical practice, and suggest resources for further information. Creating and making these resources available to teachers at staff rooms can initiate a new level of awareness about their role in SHP.

In this research, I refer to minors and women who experience sexual harassment as *victims*. In feminist writing, it is common to refer to individuals who experience sexual harassment or assault as survivors (Campoamor, 2018; Harding, 2020). I am, however, making a conscious choice to be consistent with the word victim. My understanding of the word victim is simple. A victim is someone who experienced violence by someone else. The victim may have endured and healed partially or fully from the consequences of the violence, making her a survivor. In thinking about the girls and women in the Egyptian context that I live within and am highly familiar with, the word victim remains more relatable than survivor. Reading Harding's (2020)

Times article 'What's wrong with being a victim?' helped me verbalize how I feel towards forcing the term 'survivor' even when we cannot tell if all victims feel like they have survived. The term survivor, however, may be a preference that a person chooses to identify with, and must be respected. In addressing widespread violence that millions of girls and women experience on a daily basis, amidst a movement that is only gearing up, I choose to refer to those women, including myself, as being victimized by a violent reality and gender inequality. This does not mean that these girls and women are weak, because being victimized by sexual violence is beyond an individual's control and is never the victim's fault. The girls and the women are strong and increasingly speaking up to end their victimization, empowering a movement that I present in the next chapter, but not to claim that they have overcome or survived it. Similar to Campoamor (2018), I perceive the term survivor in referring to victims whom we do not know if they *survived* as one that imposes a happy ending on an ongoing struggle.

In the next chapter, I locate the study through developing a contextual understanding of sexual harassment in Egypt. The third chapter reviews literature on sexual harassment in schools. The theoretical framework in the fourth chapter of this research is informed by a critical feminist theory and utilizes the concepts of feminist pedagogy, anti-oppressive pedagogy, teachers as change-agents and school culture as foundations for its discussion. The research paradigm and philosophical foundations of phenomenography as the methodology of this research are presented in the fifth chapter. The empirical process, which narrates the data collection, analysis and emergence of findings are further discussed in the sixth and seventh chapters. In the eighth chapter, a discussion of the findings in light of the theoretical framework is presented. The ninth chapter reflects on the research process in terms of limitations, contribution, quality, and ethics, to be followed by a final chapter presenting my conclusion.

2. Locating the Research - Story of a Movement

In the previous chapter, I presented the movement against sexual harassment as the inspiration behind this thesis. With this chapter, I aim to carefully describe the context of sexual harassment in Egypt. The previously mentioned initiative of @AssaultPolice on Instagram has encouraged speaking up against sexual harassment while exposing harassers and creating a social media movement. As a woman who relates to the nine out of 10 Egyptian women who experience sexual harassment (El Deeb, 2013), I care about the evolution and impact of this movement, and professionally seek to contribute to the work on gender-based violence prevention in Egypt,

particularly sexual harassment in schools. To offer a contextual understanding, in this chapter I describe the environment of sexual harassment and patriarchal attitudes among which Egyptian girls and women live and seek to combat. Patriarchy is a hierarchical social structure that functions to reproduce the privilege of men and oppression of other genders (Sunnari, Kangasvuo & Heikkinen, 2003). The patriarchal system has long presented itself as the default order of the world, in which men are superior to women across societies, religions and class (Ingraham, 1997 as cited in Sunnari et al., 2003). I also describe the harassment surrounding minors, and the simultaneous absence of sex education for prevention and societal change. I start by walking the reader through the phenomenon of sexual harassment in Egypt. Next, I present the environment of feminist activism against sexual harassment in the last two decades up until the recent movement in 2020. Activism as understood in this research involves documenting cases, offering judicial support, organizing initiatives, raising awareness, educating to change discourses, and shedding light on a silent phenomenon. I then present the situation surrounding sexual harassment of minors in Egypt, and sex education in Egyptian schools.

2.1 Sexual Harassment in Egypt

Girls and women in Egypt experience different forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, early marriage, domestic violence, and female genital mutilation. Although varying efforts by the state and civil organizations were exerted to reduce these forms of violence, they still occur. In addition to the previously cited UN report by El Deeb (2013) and Ebaid (2013), which mentions that 98% of Egyptian women experience sexual harassment, several other sources document the severity of the phenomenon. The Egyptian Center for Women Rights (ECWR) (2008) refers to the prevalence of sexual harassment as ‘a social cancer’ affecting the Egyptian society, while Skalli (2014) emphasizes that sexual harassment in Egypt is a violent reality for women from different socioeconomic backgrounds, age, religions, and ethnicities. In a United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women report, 99.3% of girls and women reported being victims of sexual harassment, with 49.2% of the participants experiencing daily harassment (El Deeb, 2013). Additionally, a study by the Borgen Project in 2017 declared Cairo as the most dangerous city in the world for women (Tarbox, 2020). Abdelmonem and Galán (2017) also report a study by the nonprofit organization ‘HarassMap’ in 2014 showing that 95% of the women participants face sexual harassment. In another study by Peuchaud (2014), 93% of women in Egypt who sought help from security officials amid a sexual harassment incident said that they have had no help. Although different

human rights initiatives and feminist activists have condemned harassment, the Egyptian government is yet to present women's safety as a national priority. The ECWR (2012 as cited in Ebaid, 2013) states that while the government officials release statements that criticize sexual harassment and make general promises for solutions, there have been no effective measures to combat sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment of women in Egypt involves verbal harassment, physical touches, group assaults and can sometimes be even more violent, such as in incidents where the victim is murdered defending herself (Ebaid, 2013). The public discourse is that girls and women did not experience sexual harassment in public places before the 1990s. Women often reminisce about the times when they dressed and walked freely in modern Egypt, between the 1950s and 1980s. Common explanations of the outbreak of sexual harassment since the 1990s refer to a decline of socioeconomic conditions, the decreasing quality of education, sexualized media content, and increased costs of marriage, among other social factors (Ebaid, 2013). Ebaid (2013) states that sexual harassment as a phenomenon in Egypt emerged in the 1990s but grew in severity around 2008, and further intensified following the 25th of January revolution in 2011. Hammad (2017) however, presents a more elaborate narration of the history of sexual harassment, highlighting that the Egyptian female body has been politicized since the late 19th century, and explains grass rooted reasons to sexual harassment. Kamal (2016) furthermore presents the Egyptian feminist movement across four waves. Since Hammad (2017) provides a unique historical recount of sexual harassment in Egypt, I choose to retell the author's sequence in the next paragraph while I simultaneously locate each of Kamal's (2016) feminist waves.

Sexual harassment has been ongoing since the late 1800s, yet it varied in forms and severity across the years. In the late 1800s, Egyptian women were kept out of public spaces to avoid being harassed by British occupiers (Hammad, 2017). This period witnessed the first feminist wave in which Egyptian women demanded access to formal education (Kamal, 2016). Hammad (2017) cites articles and caricatures from 1882-1908 discussing Egyptian men harassing women on the street and in public transport. At the time, Egyptian men felt defeated by the British occupation, so they directed their feelings of defeat and frustration towards women (Hammad, 2017). The harassment described by Hammad (2017) seems similar to the contemporary experiences of women on the street. In the Nasser era (1952-1970) that followed the end of Egyptian monarchy and British occupation, demands for gender equality in the second feminist wave were centered around women's legal rights, higher education, and the labor market (Hammad,

2017; Kamal, 2016). In parallel, sexual harassment became more severe, which can be explained by women increasingly joining the workforce and existing in public spaces for education and work (Hammad, 2017). The nationalist discourse in that era has portrayed Egypt as a pure woman that needs to be looked after and protected by its men from foreign threats (Hammad, 2017). This discourse was adopted by media, arts and public speech at the time, and continues to be generally admired till today (Hammad, 2017). From 1970 until 2011, Egypt witnessed the rise of neoliberalism during the presidency periods of Sadat and Mubarak (1970-1981 and 1981-2011 respectively), in addition to a rise in Islamist ideology (Hammad, 2017). During this period, more women joined the growing workforce amidst an absence of laws to protect them and became surrounded by increasing Islamist discourses about modesty that condemn women's presence in public spaces (Hammad, 2017). Women therefore collectively compromised on any demands of autonomy and adopted silent tactics for self-protection as strategies to remain and survive in the public sphere (Hammad, 2017). The third feminist wave during this period was increasingly present in civil society (Kamal, 2016). In 2011, Egyptians revolted and toppled Mubarak's regime in the January 25th revolution, also known as part of the Arab Spring. In 2011, sexual harassment intensified amidst lax security, arguably with the intention to keep women out of the political space and discourage them from protesting (Hammad, 2017). Still, the revolution, and the growing access to social media at the time, managed to draw wider attention to sexual harassment and to the activism occurring against it. Since 2011 and until current date in 2021, Egyptian society is amidst the fourth feminist wave which centers discussions and demands around women's autonomy and sexuality (Kamal, 2016).

Abdelmonem and Galán (2017) recount the governmental and legislative response towards sexual harassment from 2011 until 2015. According to the authors, social media activism since 2011 has pressured the government to take heightened legislative action against sexual harassment and improve the laws accordingly. In 2013, the Egyptian Ministry of Interior, which manages police forces, launched a unit tasked with monitoring sexual harassment, especially in public spaces during Eid (Muslim feast) gatherings. In the following year, the government issued Decree 50 to Article 306 in the law to criminalize verbal, behavioral, and digital sexual harassment. This was the first legislative acknowledgement of sexual harassment as a crime independent from rape or violations of morality (Hammad, 2017). The penalties however range between six months to five years in prison, and fine payments with a maximum of fifty thousand Egyptian pounds (equivalent to 2,600 Euros). Although legal reforms are important, a penalty

system alone is insufficient. Victims remain reluctant to file cases, and judges base their decisions on the lack of evidence to dilute penalties. Additionally, victims are often pressured to withdraw their cases after receiving threats from the defendant's family. The victim can also fear for her reputation since confidentiality measures are loose in these cases and private information frequently finds its way to media outlets. In 2015, Egyptian ministries became required to train all their employees against sexual harassment. Activists cited in the article by Abdelmonem and Galán (2017) described the mentioned training for governmental staff as an example of "cosmetic changes" by the government without a serious political will to eliminate violence against women.

Sexual harassment feeds on deeper gender inequality. These inequalities must be addressed and challenged in parallel with the efforts to combat sexual harassment (FIDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014). A safe life is not perceived as a granted right for most Egyptian women. The Egyptian society has internalized a hostile, harassment-tolerant attitude, victim-blaming culture, and lack of awareness of harassment in ways engraved by much of the society including its police and judicial system (ECWR, 2008; Skalli, 2014). The rape culture pyramid shown in Figure 1 by *11th Principle: Consent* (2018) illustrates that the normalization of harassment-tolerant behaviors leads to a culture that is degrading to women and oppressed genders, and eventually enables their assault. Harassment behaviors, according to the pyramid, include catcalling, sexist attitudes, disregard of consent, stalking, and unsolicited interactions. The degradation manifests in shaming, blaming and threatening victims. Assault, as shown at the top of the pyramid, takes the forms of drugging, molestation, and rape. In a collaborative report by four feminist organizations (FIDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014) on violence against women in Egypt, the authors mention a culture of impunity. Such impunity is reproduced through under-reporting by the victims and the absence of support from the personal and public sphere. This harassment-tolerant culture further empowers violence against women, and the adoption of oppressive notions such as victim-blaming and shame. The public's reluctance to engage in difficult conversations on gender bias, religion and culture also hinder grassroots mobilization towards a truly collective movement against sexual harassment.

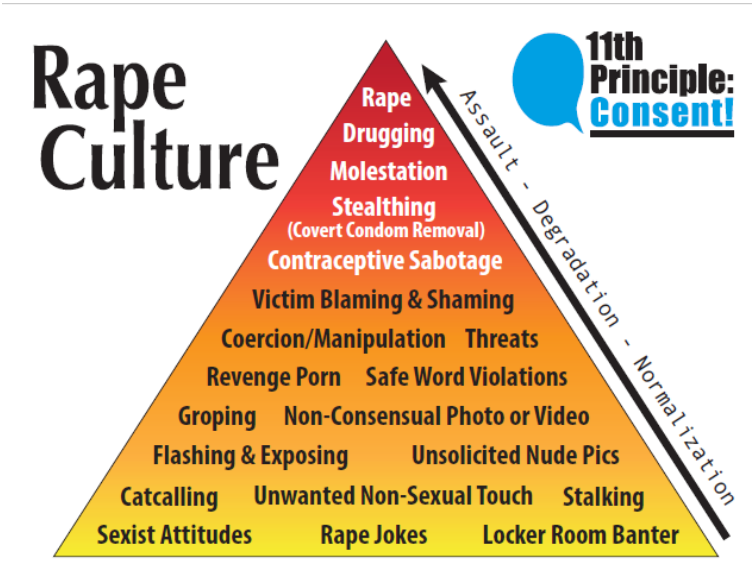


Figure 1 - Rape Culture Pyramid (11th Principle: Consent, 2011)

Sexual harassment is normalized in Egypt to the extent that women are usually reluctant to escalate the situation or respond to the incident (Abdelmonem & Galán, 2017; FIDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014). Girls are taught that the right response to harassment in public spaces is to ignore the situation, keep walking, and look forward (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015). Girls become socialized from an early age to believe that part of the harassment is their fault for not having taken the right precautions (Fahmy et al., 2014 as cited in Abdelmonem & Galán, 2017). These precautions can include dressing more conservatively, avoiding eye contact, and refraining from attracting attention through appearance, speaking in a loud voice, or laughter. Victim-blaming represents a challenge for changing the public's discourse on sexual harassment. It discourages women from speaking up against harassment or recounting their experiences in fear of judgement from the police, bystanders or their family and friends (FDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014).

Victim-blaming is a powerful silencing tool for men to retain policing and power over women behavior, body and appearance while avoiding or reducing accountability for their violent actions. While not all men are harassers or rapists, all men benefit from the existing status quo in case they assault or act violently towards a woman in the future or have – unknowingly – committed harassment in the past. The blame that a harassed victim experiences for bringing dishonor into the family locates the shame on the victim rather than on the harasser (Skalli, 2014). Egyptian women grow up internalizing victim-blame, and as a result, a victim tends to instantly blame herself for not making different choices that could have prevented the harassment

(Pauchaud, 2014). Also internalized among members of society, including women, is the normalization of harassment. As Moroccan novelist Laila Lalami (as quoted in Skalli, 2014) expressed, "it [harassment] was so prevalent that complaining about it was like complaining about bad weather" (p.245). These conditions discourage girls and women from speaking up against sexual harassment, reporting incidents, or filing lawsuits. Increasingly in Egypt, the public opinion finds ease in locating the blame on both the harasser *and* the victim, while feminist activists repeatedly condemn all sexual harassment regardless of who the victim is, where the incident took place, her lifestyle choices, or how she was dressed. Young feminists on social media blame the patriarchal social structure, gender inequality and the lack of strict disciplinary response as causes and enablers of sexual harassment.

According to Robinson (2005) and Hammad (2017), sexual harrassment is neither about sex nor attraction, but is rather a dynamic of asserting masculinity and imposing power on victims. Sexual harassment is often a way for men to demonstrate to other witnessing men or to themselves that they are performing their masculinity. The author explains that the more intimidated women are by a man, the more masculine and powerful a harasser perceives himself to be. Sexual harassment as a performance of masculinity aligns with Judith Butler's (1994 as cited in Robinson, 2005) idea of gender performativity. Performativity, according to Butler, is the production and ongoing reproduction of gender, in this case hegemonic masculinity. The prevalence of sexual harassment in Egypt, according to Hammad (2017), is a violent way in which men, especially ones with the least political and socioeconomic power, channel their masculinity. This form of violence enables them to enact male dominance while remaining anonymous in public spaces. In the cases where harassers are confronted in public, they dismiss claims by aggressively denying their actions.

Sexual harassment in Arabic is translated to *'taharosh jinsi'* which can be interpreted to include a variety of behaviors ranging from catcalling on the street, inappropriate gesture, and physical assault. Prior to the outspread of the term *'taharosh'*, people used another term: *'mo'aksa',* which means flirting, interchangeably with sexual harassment (FDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014; Hammad, 2017; Kreil, 2016). The mix-up between terms of harassment and flirting works to confuse women and girls about the seriousness and validity of their experiences and to absolve violent behavior. Following the UN discourse which was adopted by Egyptian civil society since the 1990s, sexual harassment nowadays is referred to as *'taharosh jinsi'* on formal fronts. Additionally, the mentioned law of 2014 criminalizing sexual harassment and the grad-

ual increase of awareness, also formalized the term *'taharosh jinsi'* as the appropriate translation of sexual harassment (Kreil, 2016). In street encounters however, catcalling, and unsolicited stares at women are still considered as forms of teasing and flirting, which women are expected to be flattered by, or otherwise ignore.

The violence and discomfort that women experience on a daily basis hinder their professional, personal, and recreational mobility. It sets limits and imposes dangers on their experiences as free adults in public spaces. Such violence prevents women from actualizing their full potential through education, and from substantial political and economic participation (FIDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014). Further, the sexual harassment awaiting girls at schools, or on their commute to and from school, causes daily stress and deepened fear, which forms obstacles to the girls' education, success and security (ECWR, 2009).

2.2 Women's Digital Movement 2020

Early initiatives to combat sexual harassment in Egypt started around the year 2005 (Abdemonem & Galán, 2017). During the period between 2005 and the 25th of January revolution in 2011, these initiatives were organized by nonprofit organizations, and operated on a small scale to raise awareness. As mentioned in the previous section, a common misconception surrounding sexual harassment in Egypt is that it spread after the 25th of January revolution in 2011. Abdelmonem and Galán (2017) explain that the environment of lax security and disruption around the time of the revolution intensified the spread of sexual harassment, yet the phenomenon had existed long before. Another factor that associates the political turbulence of post-2011 to sexual harassment is the simultaneous growth of social media, where sharing news became faster and more accessible. Since 2011, Egyptian activists have been shedding light on the issue of sexual harassment which had previously been absent from the public dialogue (Skalli, 2014). Egyptian feminist activists have tried to utilize digital solutions to capture and report sexual harassment incidents, published publications, and started discussions online and on television. Various initiatives were developed to raise awareness on sexual harassment and develop intervention measures, including. providing immediate help and promoting empathy among bystanders to stop the harassment. Bystanders play a key role in the prevention of sexual harassment, through changing their self-perception from passive sympathizers to active adherents (Abdelmonem & Galán, 2017). In the context of schools, bystanders can include peers, teachers, and staff as witnesses or apprehensive observers.

Carmody et al. (2009) and Greytak (2003) explain that education for SHP is an outcome of feminist organizations' work, which initiates movement on violence against women. Underlying such feminist efforts is the idea that sexual assault is one manifestation of patriarchy and gender norms that reproduce inequality. The authors highlight that within the American and Australian contexts that are referred to in their work, the feminist narrative emphasizes the agency of women, rather than the victimization and passiveness that are often associated with femininity. In the context of this research too, feminist individuals and accounts on social media which criticize awareness campaigns that seek the sympathy of the harasser, or portray women as victimized by men. They prefer instead if the portrayal is of strong women who are outraged by patriarchy and will not tolerate violence. In light of my previously explained choice to use the term victim instead of survivor, I want to emphasize that identifying as a victim of harassment does not automatically connotate begging for sympathy. Victims can also equate to strong people who actively pursue justice and demand changes that will stop their victimization.

Activists continue to rely on social media for raising awareness and collecting evidence of assault in mass attacks. However, there has not been a single initiative that received a similar public response to the one sparked by @AssaultPolice in July 2020. Launched anonymously on Instagram in July 2020, @AssaultPolice began to expose serial rapists and harassers, raise awareness on consent and pursue justice for victims (El-Wardany, 2020). The account worked side-by-side with lawyers, the national council of women, public authorities, and activists to bring the famous cases of Ahmed Bassam Zaki and the Fairmont rapists to justice (Egyptian Streets, 2020). It was the main source of updates on arrests and investigation of famous alleged harassment cases and was deemed trustworthy even while it remained anonymous. Due to the claims it made against powerful and rich men, @AssaultPolice received threats and temporarily deactivated the account, which made the public more attentive and angrier. Since the rise of @AssaultPolice in July 2020, women have been sharing their experiences with harassment with increased openness, and more feminist accounts are being created to discuss and educate the public about consent, gender-based violence and patriarchy (Leila, 2021; Tyson, 2021). Feminist consciousness is a term described by Gerda Lerner (1993, as cited in Kamal, 2016) which describes the state of women recognizing their lesser status, relating to each other and demanding change. Social media since 2011 has been mobilizing the feminist movement in Egypt where girls and young women are increasingly developing their collective feminist consciousness.

Keller, Mendes and Ringrose's (2018) locate their study about digital feminism against rape culture in a "cultural moment where feminism and misogyny are becoming increasingly visible" (p.23). In the Egyptian context too, young women are utilizing social media as a relatively safe space for them to combat sexual harassment and sustain a movement. In my observation of feminists and influencers supporting the movement, I was able to distinguish two groups: one group tackles sexual harassment as a phenomenon that is independent of the patriarchal context, while others address the issue with an understanding of underlying aspects of class, patriarchy, and structural violence in society. In agreement with Hall (2014), a total movement is required in order to shed light on these injustices and empower women's safety and agency through a gradual cultural transformation. hooks (1984) posits that a movement that tackles all forms of violence as being more likely to raise collective awareness and enable women control over their bodies and lives. Social media activism, similar to other mediums for activism, assumes a 'bottom-up approach' to impact policies - making its abidance to policies or perceived norms counterintuitive. Social media activism has the advantage of being more accessible and less exclusive among activists, which allows feminist partnerships, collaboration, and wider outreach (Pauchaud, 2014).

@AssaultPolice has not been working alone, but rather building on the work of previous initiatives, however limited their impact may have been. The account has also been collaborating with a network of digital feminists on Instagram to unify their voices, exchange knowledge or visibility, and provide moral support. In July 2020, the admin of the @AssaultPolice account was assumed to be a group rather than an individual and was rumored to be led by a man known within activist networks (Hamamdjian, 2020). Nadeen Ashraf, a 23 years old philosophy student at The American University in Cairo revealed weeks later her identity as the founder of the account, stating that she receives help from friends and volunteers (Khairat, 2020). Her initiative to start @AssaultPolice emerged out of frustration, and an urge to bring harassment cases to justice. While the identity of Nadeen Ashraf has gained media attention, recognition and the support of feminist activists, members of the public expressed concern and skepticism about her young age and lack of experience. This aligns with Cynthia Enloe's (2013 as cited in Skalli, 2014) mention of the common backlash against women activists who are frequently trivialised or and discredited through being called naïve, angry, or elitist.

Skalli (2014) distinguishes between the young activists appearing after 2011 and traditional state feminism. Since the 1950s, state feminists have been working in line with the state's agenda for gender equality, which focuses on access to employment and education (Hammad,

2017). State and traditional feminism have often been associated with elitism, where the rich educated women attempt to save the poor oppressed women (Skalli, 2014). State and traditional feminists have practiced bounded activism on the conditions of abiding by the norms and existing power structures to achieve *small wins* (Hammad, 2017). Meanwhile, young activists tend to address broader issues of freedom and underlying dimensions of gender-based violence such as patriarchal attitudes and misogyny. According to Skalli (2014), young activists are more diverse and accessible. I however perceive the recent movement to be technologically accessible yet to an extent, socially exclusive. Although most Egyptian women are victims of sexual harassment, the recent wave of feminist activists tend to sound privileged in the education they received, their supportive family and friends, and their frequent use of English language with varying efforts to educate themselves about the Arabic translations of their content. It is important for the new network of feminist activists to recognize their positions in society and their privilege when addressing the public through online mediums, to avoid being deemed irrelevant and elitist. Despite the united common front, layers of privilege and oppression also exist among the sexually harassed women of Egypt and efforts geared towards empowerment can at times have the opposite effect. Prudence and critical thinking are therefore needed with close inspection of privilege by the most outspoken activists on social media. Young feminist activists, enabled by social media and an increasing audience, have stronger negotiating power over their discourse and vision for the feminist movement in Egypt. In the next section, I present one of @AssaultPolice's stories to provide an example of how the account engages its followers and encourages them to share experiences with sexual harassment that took place while they were still minors at schools.

2.3 Sexual Harassment of Minors

There is a lack of research and documentation available on the numbers of children who experience sexual harassment in Egypt. Minors, as I define them in this research, are people younger than 18 years old, which also includes children and adolescents. Because of their young age, minors can face feelings of confusion or shame around their experiences with sexual harassment, which may discourage them from sharing them with their families or other caregiving adults, such as teachers. The social stigma surrounding the issue, which adolescents can understand, results in the under-reporting of incidents.

In a study conducted in 2015 by the Egyptian National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) in collaboration with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

(UNICEF), about 10-13% of the parents surveyed mentioned that their children had shared experiences of harassment. The study also surveyed teenagers of 13 to 17 years old who shared experiences with verbal harassment and touching, but none of the teenagers mentioned coerced sexual intercourse. Parents in the same study have shown general awareness of sexual harassment in its different forms. To protect their girls, the parents encourage their daughters to minimize their interaction with boys and men. The girls are taught that conversing or giving attention to boys and men can encourage harassment. Parents conveyed opinions of shared responsibility between the girl and the harasser, claiming that it is the girl's behavior or appearance that invites harassment. Parents also understood sexual harassment to be a consequence of the internet, which exposes boys to violent and pornographic content. The adolescents in the study however, explained that the security decline post-2011 enabled the increase of harassment. It is worth noting that the boys in the study do not consider staring or commenting on a girl's body as harassment. Teachers and principals in the same study, as well as parents, associate sexual harassment to internet access, as well as to the influence of western culture through television and movies. The study did not further elaborate on how the teachers explain the western culture's contribution to sexual harassment among adolescents in Egypt. The study also mentions that community leaders criticize the educational governance in Egypt which instead of firing teachers who are accused of harassment, transfers them to a different school, which in turn endangers more children (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015).

With regards to educational governance and schools as setting for the sexual harassment of minors, schools in Egypt have an emotional and physical abuse policy, but not a policy for sexual harassment (NCCM & UNICEF, 2015). In 2017 however, a press release by the Ministry of Education appeared in several newspapers, announcing the distribution of a periodical handout (no. 31) that urges principals to prevent *moral violations* in schools (Alsaeedy, 2018; Mohamed, 2017; Yehia, 2017). The violations include sexual harassment, whereas the suggested procedures involve strict monitoring of school premises, talking to students about sexual harassment, and enforcing strict measures towards teachers who get reported for harassment.

In this section, I want to highlight the gap between the available research and actual experiences of girls who experience sexual harassment in schools. @AssaultPolice started a thread on Instagram in August 2020 where followers were encouraged to share their experiences with harassment that occurred on school premises. Almost 200 responses were posted by the account in the following week. The responses included mostly women, but also some by men, who recount

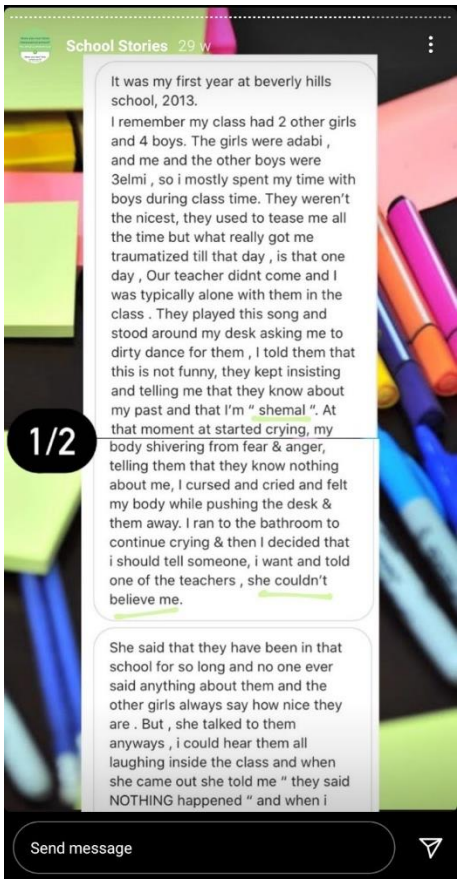
their recent and decade-ago incidents of sexual harassment. The respondents used Arabic, English and Franco-Arabic in their responses. Franco-Arabic is a texting style where Arabs type Arabic words using English letters. I selected a few of the responses, presented below, which capture a fraction of the collective experience of girls in schools, and the interventions by schools. The thread was triggered by the famous case of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, which @AssaultPolice was originally created to expose. Ahmed Bassam Zaki was exposed and imprisoned in July of 2020 for harassing tens of teenage girls (sources estimate 70 to 100 cases) while he was studying at different high schools and universities. The account is public, and these stories are still available on the account, where some school names are mentioned. These schools were invited to contact the page if they wish to correct or explain any of the information shared by the account's followers.

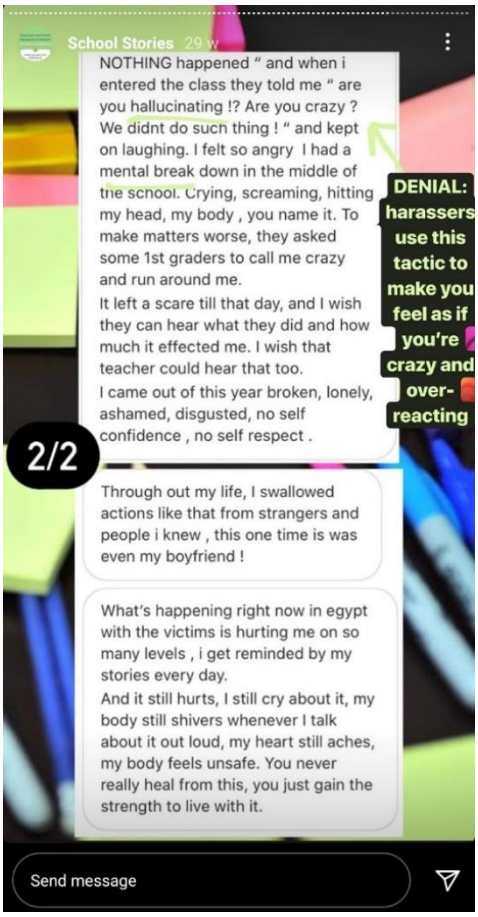
**This is a trigger warning as some of the following responses include descriptions of their harassment*. [Source: @AssaultPolice - Instagram]


School Stories 31 w
What's your story? What school was it?
The school councilor at ais said I was gorgeous and wishes I wasn't underage
What's your story? What school was it?
I told the principal about someone groping me and he did nothing
What's your story? What school was it?
The Arabic teachers at AIS CONSTANTLY harassed many many girls myself included
Send message

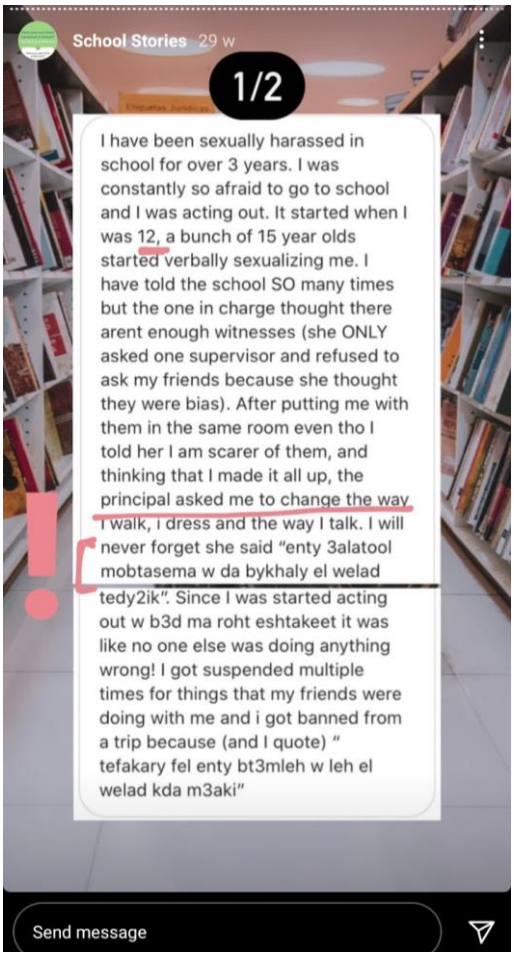

What's your story? What school was it?
"DET".Eng Teacher,showing me movie scene for MennaShalaby zooming on her breast.
What's your story? What school was it?
كان عندنا مدرس جغرافيا بيقومنا من مكانا نلم الخريطه ونجاوب مخصوص علشان يبص على جسمنا والمدرسين كانوا عارفين
What's your story? What school was it?
Ther was a boy in the bus with me he kept touching me in hips and then i told my mum and he didn't (1
What's your story? What school was it?
And when i tolde my friend that boy was touching me she said its no big deel just let it pass


School Stories 30 w
What's your story? What school was it?
My PE teacher used to kiss me and hug me when I was in 4th or 5th grade but >>
What's your story? What school was it?
I didn't realize en tha was a kind of sexual harassment lehad mn orayeb >>>
What's your story? What school was it?
I went to the headmistress and complained about what happened,elh he left the school
SOMETIMES IT TAKES YEARS FOR SURVIVORS TO REALIZE THEY WERE ASSAULTED
Send message


School Stories 29 w
It was my first year at beverly hills school, 2013.
I remember my class had 2 other girls and 4 boys. The girls were adabi , and me and the other boys were 3elmi , so i mostly spent my time with boys during class time. They weren't the nicest, they used to tease me all the time but what really got me traumatized till that day , is that one day , Our teacher didnt come and I was typically alone with them in the class . They played this song and stood around my desk asking me to dirty dance for them , I told them that this is not funny, they kept insisting and telling me that they know about my past and that I'm " shemal ". At that moment at started crying, my body shivering from fear & anger, telling them that they know nothing about me, I cursed and cried and felt my body while pushing the desk & them away. I ran to the bathroom to continue crying & then I decided that i should tell someone, i want and told one of the teachers , she couldn't believe me.
1/2
She said that they have been in that school for so long and no one ever said anything about them and the other girls always say how nice they are . But , she talked to them anyways , i could hear them all laughing inside the class and when she came out she told me " they said NOTHING happened " and when i
Send message


School Stories 29 w
NOTHING happened " and when i entered the class they told me " are you hallucinating !? Are you crazy ? We didnt do such thing ! " and kept on laughing. I felt so angry I had a mental break down in the middle of the school. Crying, screaming, hitting my head, my body , you name it. To make matters worse, they asked some 1st graders to call me crazy and run around me.
It left a scare till that day, and I wish they can hear what they did and how much it effected me. I wish that teacher could hear that too.
I came out of this year broken, lonely, ashamed, disgusted, no self confidence , no self respect .
DENIAL: harassers use this tactic to make you feel as if you're crazy and over-reacting
2/2
Through out my life, I swallowed actions like that from strangers and people i knew , this one time is was even my boyfriend !
What's happening right now in egypt with the victims is hurting me on so many levels , i get reminded by my stories every day.
And it still hurts, I still cry about it, my body still shivers whenever I talk about it out loud, my heart still aches, my body feels unsafe. You never really heal from this, you just gain the strength to live with it.
Send message


School Stories 29 w
This isn't my story but it happened infront of me. When I was 11, We had a P.E. Teacher who sexually harassed girls, he once put his hand inside my friend's pants cuz he was "helping her tuck her T-shirt in her pants" & he kept touching her body pretending to fix her clothes! We were all terrified but we couldn't say anything cuz nobody would've believed a bunch of kids
Send message



In the last image, the pink exclamation mark points towards the principal's response, which translates to: "You are always smiling, and this makes boys tease you". The girl explains that after complaining, she got frequent detentions, and on one occasion was banned from a school trip to [quoting her quote the principal] "Reflect on your actions and what makes the boys treat you that way". The responses shown above represent only a small number of the victims who shared their stories. Themes of denial and dismissal of the victim's feelings by the school's administration and peers when they speak up are common throughout. Another apparent notion is victim-blaming, where the victims are perceived by their teachers to be inviting harassment and as having the ability to stop it, if only they would change their appearance, behavior or improve their reputation as "good girls". Not only do schools seemingly lack the adequate policies, measures, and attitude to respond to sexual harassment, but they also offer inadequate or no sex education whatsoever. Sex education, if implemented thoughtfully, can help prevent sexual violence in schools and society. In the next section, I discuss the available information on access and practice of sex education in Egyptian schools.

2.4 Sex Education in Egypt

A few academic sources on sex education in Egypt have been referred to in order to inform this section (ECWR, 2009; Geel, 2012; Roushdy, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Although the constitution of 1971 obliges the state to provide health services for the people (article 16), safeguard children and youth (article 10) and educate all citizens (article 18), the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education that Egyptian students receive at schools is severely limited (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). In 1994, during the International Conference on Population and Development, Egypt agreed to inform and provide services for adolescents on sexual health (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). SRH education provides education as the students' right and contributes to safeguarding efforts where minors can protect themselves and be aware of harassment. SRH education also involves aspects of physical, emotional, and mental health in intimate relationships, understanding sexuality, and reproductive planning.

The lack of appropriate resources to SRH drives minors to unreliable and inaccurate sources to learn about sexuality (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Egyptian families traditionally refrain from discussing sexuality with their children, in accordance with inherited values and religious beliefs (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Egyptian culture inherits traditional ideas of shame and stigma around discussing sex that are often packaged in religious values of modesty. Engaging in premarital sex can lead to serious negative consequences, particularly for girls who can face labelling, social exclusion, threats or abandonment by family. The common notion is that the necessary amount of SRH education takes place before marriage to prepare the young couple for the beginning of their sexual experiences. Until marriage, sexual abstinence is expected from adolescents and young adults. This traditional silencing practice disregards adolescents' curiosity over their bodies and sexuality, sexual pleasure, and orientation, leaving them uninformed (or misinformed) about physical changes during puberty.

In my experience as a school student, sex education was limited to one science lesson on the reproductive system. Years later as a classroom teacher, sex education remained entirely absent from the primary curricula I taught. Sex education is commonly referred to in light of the science curriculum in preparatory stage (age 12 to 14) which includes one unit about the reproductive system (Geel, 2012; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). The reproductive system is further reviewed in secondary school for students who study biology in their final year (age 17). The depth of coverage and engagement with the topic is dependent on the teacher and the school culture. It is explained in the limited available literature that the material is delivered in a rushed

and superficial manner to avoid embarrassment and further questions by the students. In many classrooms around the country, the unit is skipped altogether, where the students are advised to self-study the lesson at home or are assured that the content would be excluded from assessments (Geel, 2012; Roushdy, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012).

Geel (2012) mentions that teachers feel differently about the sufficiency of the SRH content in the curriculum. While some teachers perceive the single biology unit in preparatory stage to be enough, there are others who disagree and describe it as inadequate. Besides the concern on the sufficiency of the content, the delivery itself largely varies according to the teachers' beliefs and competencies. School principals and teachers, according to the author, explain that there is no system in place to enforce quality standards for the delivery of SRH education. Generally, subject teachers are monitored by their supervisors and receive inspection visits from the central educational administration. In principle then, there are monitoring and inspection efforts that can ensure guidelines to teaching SRH are being met. Any actual high-quality teaching of SRH can however raise controversy amongst teachers and principals who agree to the sensitivity surrounding sex education, in addition to fear of parental resistance. In the same study by Geel (2012), the teachers share a feeling of incompetency when it comes to communicating topics of SRH, especially in mixed gender classrooms, which exist in co-ed schools. They do not feel supported by the school administration or society to confidently deliver the content and access reliable sources to prepare for these lessons. The mentioned incompetency poses a major obstacle facing any future modifications to the curriculum (Roushdy, 2013). This suggests that efforts towards teachers' professional development and their preparation to teach SRH material are necessary.

Hyde et al. (2011) and Leaf and Keys (2005) explain that educators often resort to inconsistent disciplinary measures towards incidents of harassment since they are unprepared to engage with the issue on a deeper level. In Egypt, there have been a few organizations that launched SRH education initiatives since the 1990s, some of which were done in collaboration with schools (Roushdy, 2013). These organizations offered an alternative source to SRH education in response to the knowledge gap amongst adolescents. One example of a governmental program implemented in collaboration with schools was by the Egyptian National Council of Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) (Roushdy, 2013). The program provided SRH education to adolescents through 36 schools in 12 different cities. A common challenge that faces this public health collaboration approach

according to George (2006) is building the networks between schools and organizations to ease access and enable partnerships. This is particularly true in the case of Egypt as Roushdy (2013) explains that the program faced challenges in accessing and negotiating with school leaders, despite being organized by a governmental institution. Educators have shown skepticism towards the program, assuming it was a western agenda to change Egyptian traditions. The Ministry of Education, however, can endorse and recommend these initiatives which would support the organizations in their negotiations with schools. More recently in Egypt, a local nonprofit initiative called Safe Kids that was founded in 2012 has been collaborating with schools to deliver sessions to students and parents about sexual harassment prevention ("About - Safe Kids", n.d.). Until there are policies and laws that oblige schools to cooperate with SRH projects, and to provide SRH education to their students, efforts will vary and be left up to each school's staff. As long as sex education remains absent from the curriculum in addition to lack of teacher training on sexual harassment, then public health professionals remain the most equipped to work with the students and simultaneously pass on their knowledge to school teams.The report by Roushdy (2013) for the Egyptian Initiative of Personal Rights recommends that a prerequisite to implement SRH education at or with schools, is to train the teachers on delivering the content to adolescents. This was also listed as a priority by Wahba and Roudi-Fahimi (2012) in their recommendation for effective SRH.

Amidst the widespread sexual harassment, sexuality education is important to help mitigate the culture and change mindsets (Roushdy, 2013; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013). Firm judicial response is crucial for prevention, yet it should work alongside an educational vision for societal reform. Sexuality education was defined in 2009 by the UNFPA (as cited in Roushdy, 2013, p. 18) as "a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles.". There remains, however, no official organization that is entirely dedicated to formal or informal sexuality education in Egypt, but rather temporary programs and initiatives (Roushdy, 2013). Increasingly, social media enables platforms such as @ThisisMotherBeing, @LoveMattersArabic, @Mauj.Me, and @Niswaorg to raise awareness and provide alternative sexuality education. The mentioned Instagram accounts have promising potential in changing mindsets, particularly amongst women who have digital access and literacy. They each have followers that range between 50-200K from Egypt and other Middle Eastern and North African countries. Considering the population of Egyptian youth of approximately 25 million, the outreach of

these platforms remains limited, and the scope of their impact requires further research. Additionally, ensuring that children and youth receive quality education, including SRH education, is the mandate of schools and should not be fully delegated to other platforms that require special access or reach only an already-interested audience.

To this day, schools remain the most cost-effective, age-appropriate and accessible medium for positive social change. Schools gather millions of Egyptian adolescents, and parents express trust in the schools to deliver SRH education to their children (Geel, 2012; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Schools have a responsibility to teach and promote health and wellbeing amongst their students for protection and awareness. Students have a right to learn about emotional, mental, and physical health (Roushdy, 2013; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). The years that students spend at school offer wide room for teaching them about respectful relationships, body autonomy, healthy partnership, and safety (ECWR, 2009). Teachers as professionals can be trained to teach age-appropriate lessons from early childhood till graduation as young adults (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Teachers can play a crucial role in educating students about sexuality to protect themselves against harassment, harmful relationships and have enough awareness to report incidents they witness or experience. Children who are supported with age-appropriate sexuality education can make preventive decisions in addition to verbalizing their boundaries and experiences. As adolescents, SRH education improves their intimate relationships, protects them from risky behaviors, provides accurate information as well as improves their communication and gendered attitudes (Roushdy, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012).

Chilisa (2006) remarks that sex education has been widely informed by western perspectives that do not apply to the school contexts in the global south. Hence, available sources on sex education in Egypt emphasize a culturally sensitive and age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (ECWR. 2009; Geel, 2012; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Having reported teachers, students, and parents' perspectives, Geel (2012) recommends comprehensive sexuality education in Egypt that involves participation by families, religious institutions, and media, alongside the efforts of schools. The idea of comprehensive sexuality education according to different sources can be an interdisciplinary theme in the curriculum or offered as an independent subject. An interdisciplinary theme of sexuality education across different subjects can dilute the stigma and align with progressive thematic teaching. This interdisciplinary nature can however make it easy for teachers to skip that part or choose

not to integrate it with their subjects, since there is no specific curriculum to cover, nor a single person held accountable to covering it. The author also mentions that science and religion classes were deemed as the fittest spaces to discuss SRH topics for scientific basis and religious alignment. This shows that teachers, parents, and students in the cited study were keen on only adopting a sexuality education curriculum that teaches within the frame of traditions and religion. Given the heteronormative culture and conservative majority in Egyptian society, this frame would restrict and impose boundaries to sexuality education that tries to promote autonomy or is inclusive of sexualities.

In regard to teaching an independent subject of sexuality education, Geel (2012) states a consensus by the participants to separate SRH lessons by gender. In this regard, Clinton-Sherrod et al. (2009) and Greytak (2003) recommend that program designers consider the gender setup according to the desirable outcomes of sexuality education and violence prevention programs. Mixed gender sessions can be useful in starting a dialogue between genders, and single gender sessions can be better altered to fit their specific concerns (Hyde et al., 2011). Given Geel's remark (2012) about Egyptian teachers' general reluctance to address sensitive topics of sexual nature with the students, then single gender lessons might be a useful context-sensitive approach. Comprehensive sexuality education can utilize the expertise of specialists from organizations to train teachers and deliver sessions to students. Training can enhance the teachers' competencies to deliver the content, facilitate discussions and build trusting relationships with the students (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). In line with the context explained above, comprehensive sexuality education in Egypt needs to explicitly address the issue of sexual harassment from early childhood all the way to university level. Through incorporating sexual harassment in the curriculum, the stigma surrounding the issue can be broken for improved prevention and interventions (ECWR, 2009; FIDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014). Geel (2012) and Roushdy (2013) explain that the name 'comprehensive sexuality education' is an obstacle. Educators and families often object to seminars, curricular content, or subjects with names that include the word sex. Geel (2012) explained that participants prefer to call SRH education 'family health' while the Roushdy (2013) recounted incidents where seminars got cancelled due to conflicts over the title. Even if the aspired comprehensive sexuality education involves topics that are broader than reproduction and family planning, it is advisable to maintain flexibility to navigate similar resistance.

By presenting this contextual chapter, my intention is to broaden the background of the topic and to locate the research within its larger context. In the next chapter I review international literature about SHP in relation to broader gender issues and schools, while presenting different levels of SHP.

3. Review of the Literature about Sexual Harassment in Schools

In this third chapter, international literature about sexual harassment in schools is explored in order to deepen my understanding of the topic, and to highlight the different ways in which the topic has been previously addressed. I begin with an overview of the different phenomena of gender-based violence, which includes sexual harassment (section 3.1). I then establish the relationship between sexual harassment and gender inequality in schools (section 3.2). Afterwards, I focus in section 3.3 on the schools' role towards SHP. In the last section, I explore levels for SHP in schools (3.4).

3.1 Sexual Harassment as Gender-Based Violence in Schools

A report by the United Nations for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009) on gender-based violence in schools mentions "its psychological, physical and sexual forms" (p.12). The same report by the UNESCO (2009) in addition to Hyde et al. (2011) and George (2006) all refer to how this violence towards women, from when they are still girls, discriminates against them and upholds a power imbalance. Taylor, Stein and Burden (2010) refer to O'Toole, Schiffman and Edwards' (2007) broader explanation of gender-based violence as "violation perpetrated against people due to their gender identity, sexual orientation, or location in the hierarchy of male-dominated social systems" (p.202). Thus, the cited authors all emphasize the inequality and power imbalance of gender-based violence that targets and harms women across the course of their lives, starting from their school years.

Hyde, Imbesi, Price, Sharrock & Tufa (2011) mention sexual assault, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment as forms of several gender-based violence behaviors. Leach and Mitchell (2006) describe sexual assault to involve physical coercion of sexual interactions and can involve rape. The authors state that sexual assault of minors is also referred to as sexual abuse due to the power imbalance inflicted on children and adolescents. Therefore, sexual assault involves a physical manifestation, while sexual abuse refers to a power imbalance. Sexual harassment is

presented in previous chapters and is of central importance to this thesis, with its prevention being the phenomenon most closely considered in this research. Sexual harassment involves physical and nonphysical behaviors or gestures that have sexual connotation that threaten, hurt, or degrade a person (Robinson, 2005). Acts of sexual harassment whether physical, verbal, digital or intangible can leave the victims feeling a wide range of negative emotions such as humiliation, fear, and oppression (Leach & Mitchell, 2006).

Leach and Mitchell (2006) and Sunnari et al. (2003) emphasize that sexual harassment at school should not be perceived nor referred to as bullying, since bullying implies gender-neutrality, while sexual harassment is rooted in gender inequality. This however depends on the authors' understanding of and familiarity with bullying. In my experience as a student and teacher in the Egyptian context, bullying often, but not always, involves a gendered dimension where it has a male connotation of aggression. Usually, this aggression is directed towards shaming and threatening girls, or towards boys who are perceived to be less masculine than society's standards. However, bullying is described as a gender-neutral phenomenon by the authors to highlight it as an individual behavior issue that requires individualized intervention. This is distinguishable from sexual harassment as a broader issue of gender inequality that calls for a social approach in response. Additionally, recognizing sexual harassment for what it is, rather than confining it to the term bullying, allows for the legislative procedures to be taken forward. Stein and Land (1999; 2003 as cited in Witkowska, 2005) however mention that if schools define sexual harassment to fit under the umbrella of bullying, then it can encourage students to speak up to avoid the sexual victimization. Each school administration therefore should examine its context to decide on whether sexual harassment will be addressed as an independent phenomenon of sexism, or if it better serves their aims to incorporate it in their bullying interventions.

In the literature I reviewed, I found that the term sexual harassment was sometimes used interchangeably with alternative terminologies, including gendered harassment and sexist harassment. Meyer (2006), Witkowska (2005) as well as Rinehart and Espelage (2015) state that gendered harassment imposes heterosexual gender roles through harmful behaviors such as bullying, social exclusion, labelling, and physical violence. In relevance to schools, the author explains that gendered harassment takes physical and verbal forms, with physical forms receiving more attention from the school staff. Verbal harassment is however more frequent and equally harmful to female students. It often involves male students offending or sexualizing female students while teachers may take part or remain passive towards stopping the harassment (Meyer, 2006). Robinson (2005) highlights that the ambiguity surrounding the definition of

sexual harassment creates hesitance to recognize an experience as sexism or as sexual harassment. This is important since sexual harassment supposedly has consequential responses that should be taken forward. The author refers to Fitzgerald's (1990) definition of sexist harassment as "generalized sexist remarks and behaviour" (p. 25) which are intended to offend and degrade but not for sexual seduction or coercion. I find the differences between sexual harassment, gendered harassment and sexist harassment as overlapping. The three terms center gender as the essence and target of their harassing acts and gestures. Hence, in this research, sexual harassment will be used to encompass the mentioned understandings of gendered and sexist harassment.

It is impossible to separate sexual harassment from other forms of gender-based violence. All gender-based violence forms result from the same power imbalance between genders and the patriarchal social structure that enables it. Thus, understanding the relevant terms are essential to understand the issues in a concrete and holistic manner. Sexual harassment is the phenomenon most widely experienced by Egyptian girls and women. SHP programs can therefore create safer educational environments and can simultaneously minimize risks of assault since it is essentially a physical escalation and extreme form of harassment. Education for SHP by teachers at schools would help girls stand up and speak up against harassment and other forms of sexual violence. The same education can contribute to social change through changing mindsets of youth towards sexual harassment and other gender-based violence behaviors.

3.2 Culture of Sexual Harassment and Gender Inequality in Schools

Sexual harassment is understood as a violent extension of existing gender inequality (Leach, 2006; Witkowska, 2005). Sexual harassment at schools is thus, according to the author, a by-product of the gender norms that are perceived as normal in society. Sexual harassment is not an independent phenomenon that can be understood in isolation, but rather as a manifestation of the existing patriarchy. Sexual harassment experiences at schools are when the normalization of male dominance over women begins (Thomas & Kitzinger 1997 as cited in Sunnari et al., 2003). It establishes the power imbalance and trains youth to learn their gender norms to reproduce it throughout the course of their lives (Robinson, 2005). Leach and Mitchell (2006) add that the fear of violence itself is a form of violence that girls experience in public places, including schools. Various international authors emphasize that definitions of sexual harassment in educational settings must recognize the negative implications on the student's ability to fully

benefit and attend to their education (Rinehart and Espelage, 2015; Taylor et al., 2010; Witkowska and Menckel, 2005). Sunnari et al. (2003) explain that the normalization of sexist attitudes and sexual harassment results in an ambiguous zone for recognizing victimization at schools. The authors highlight that cultural differences and individual subjectiveness contribute to the absence of strict unified recognition of harassing behaviors. Increasingly in the Egyptian context, I encounter and participate in discussions on whether a certain incident is considered sexual harassment, and the 'reasonably' proportionate response, since many of the recently flagged attitudes, have been normalized for much of our lives. This culture of impunity, which has only recently been challenged, relates to the pyramid of rape culture previously shown (Figure 1) where normalized harassment-tolerant behaviors gradually enable violent escalations such as assault.

Robinson (2005) discussed how secondary school students perceived sexual harassment to be only a physical behavior. The author explained that the binary between the physical and other forms of harassment (e.g., verbal, digital, written) works to underestimate and dismiss girls' experiences. Non-physical harassment is more prevalent at schools yet its dismissal as less serious normalizes these behaviors as part of the culture. This demonstrates that the pyramid of rape culture (Figure 1) not only manifests in society but also within institutions such as schools. Witkowska (2005) remarks that gender inequality and its normalisation does not only lead to gender-based violence, but also adds to the harm inflicted by the tendency to not believe women. Women in a hegemonic understanding of femininity are perceived to frequently complain and be emotional. This, coupled with the normalization of non-physical SH in schools, leads to girls and women's physical and emotional pain to be underestimated and their experiences to be considered exaggerated.

Being mentioned by authors in different locations, shows that the lack of reporting is a transnational challenge facing schools in preventing or responding to sexual harassment (Leach, 2006; Witkowska & Gädi 2005). Witkowska and Gädi (2005) explain that only a limited number of students recognize their harassment or have the willingness to report it. Additionally, Witkowska (2005) states that girls are reluctant to identify as 'victims' and manage the emotional consequences of this label. Lee (2001 as cited in Witkowska, 2005) suggests that schools break down the terms 'sexual violence' or 'sexual misconduct' into several well-defined terms to help victims identify their own experiences as such and validate them. The victimized students, according to the report, can be afraid of labeling, shaming, being dismissed or accused of lying. Witkowska and Menckel (2005) explain that on the societal level, the prevalence of sexual

harassment, prevents girls and women from fulfilling their academic and professional potential which impacts their communities and society at large. Sexual harassment awaiting the girls at schools or on their commute to and from school causes daily stress and deepened fear, which forms obstacles to the girls' education, success, and security (ECWR, 2009). Girls who are either victims of sexual harassment or afraid of sexual harassment, become discouraged from attending to their education. The harassment or assault experiences at schools can cause drop-out, lower academic achievement and high absence rate among other negative consequences such as lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem and difficulty establishing healthy relationships as an adult (George, 2006; Sanchez et al., 2001; UNESCO, 2009; Wessler & Preble, 2003; Witkowska, 2005; Witkowska & Gädi, 2005; Young, Grey & Boyd, 2009). In my experience with the Egyptian context too, lack of reporting has made sexual harassment remarkably silent despite its severe prevalence. This can start to change by encouraging victims to speak up while improving the reporting procedures and supportive channels for them to feel safe and protected by the school, the judicial system and society at large.

Leach and Mitchell (2006) claim that even when the violence appears to attack race, religion, class or ability, an intersection with gender exists, which locates certain individuals at higher risk and less privilege. Similarly, Rinehart and Espelage (2015) explain that harassment cases usually involve a dimension of gender or sexual orientation. Harassment according to Leach and Mitchell (2006) is more directed towards 'intersecting identities'. LaMantia, Wagner and Bohecker (2015) explain the concept of intersectionality as multiple layers of oppression that a person can experience. Further, these multiple layers of oppression create an overlapping structure of discrimination and marginalization against the person. Intersecting identities at school can include a girl who is perceived as gender non-conforming, or a boy who presents himself in a traditionally feminine manner while also belonging to a marginalized religion or race, has a disability or perceived as lower class. There is a minority of black students in Egyptian schools such as Nubians or students of Sudanese origin. The black female students can then be more at risk of harassment. Egyptians are known to be Muslims and Christians as the two religions that are recognized by the state. Egypt has a Muslim majority where Christians make 10 to 15% of the Egyptian population (Rizk, 2017). In a typical classroom, Christian students are a religious minority with one or few students. These however are mere speculations within the understanding of how intersectional identities can be at higher risk of sexual harassment at schools in Egypt. In his remarks about the Australian context, Robinson (2005), stated that research on

how intersectionality manifests in sexual harassment is limited. Similarly, while exploring research on the Egyptian context, I was not able to find literature on sexual harassment at schools with an intersectional dimension. There is no available data about the specific identities of the minors who experience sexual abuse or harassment at schools in Egypt.

3.3 The Role of Schools in Sexual Harassment Prevention

International organizations and initiatives in the developing countries according to Dunne, Humphreys and Leach (2003) and George (2006) often focus on enrolling girls at schools without ensuring the readiness and safety of the educational environment. Schools are neither safe by default nor neutral, but rather an extension to the reality of the society that exists outside its fence (Dunne et al., 2003; Leach, 2006). In an important statement about access and safety, George (2006) remarks that "the right to education must be understood to consist of more than a seat in a classroom" (p.21). Similarly, Leach and Mitchell (2006) highlight the school's responsibility to ensure the safety of the students so they can focus and enjoy learning. Pinheiro (2006) describes quality education that teaches values and human rights as a 'social vaccine' to combat violence. Since, sexual harassment in Egypt was described as a 'social cancer' by the ECWR (2008), it is thus a sentiment of hope that the vaccine is within schools to be delivered by teachers.

Several sources state the severity and prevalence of sexual harassment of girls at schools and recognize it as a public health and educational concern (George, 2006; Sundaram, 2014; Taylor et al., 2010; Witkowska, 2005; Witkowska & Gädi, 2005; Witkowska & Menckell, 2005; Young et al., 2009). The UNESCO report (2009) on school violence and Young et al. (2009) explain that there is limited information on sexual harassment and assault at schools due to underreporting of cases. Although sexual harassment in schools is unsufficiently researched with different literature referring to the absence of data (e.g., UNESCO, 2009; Young et al., 2009), several sources still emphasize that schools are sites of sexual harassment (Dunne et al., 2003; George, 2006; Sanchez et al., 2001; Sundaram, 2014; Witkowska & Gädi, 2005; Witkowska & Menckell, 2005). Young et al. (2009) remark that sexual violence at schools is often defined within the terms sexual assault and sexual aggression which only entail a physical behavior. Schools thus, according to the authors, need to develop a better understanding of the different forms of sexual violence in order to better prevent it.

Schools are described by Witkowska (2005) as settings that refrain from engagement with the full scope of sexual harassment. At schools, sexual harassment is perceived as misbehavior of sexually driven adolescents or an inappropriate manner to express feelings of attraction (Robinson, 2005; Witkowska, 2005). This reluctant approach by school leaders and teachers in addressing sexual harassment adds to the students' feelings of hesitance and confusion (Wessler & Preble, 2003). Schools should utilize being a trusted institution with qualified staff, who can be trained, to ensure the safety of the environment and educate to change harassment attitudes. Granskog et al. (2018) and Sanchez et al. (2001) state that harassment-tolerance and aggression start at primary age (6 to 11 years), so teaching non-violence and gender equality should have an early start at schools before they intensify during adolescence. Additionally, Kernsmith and Hernandez-Jozefowics (2011) explain that problems such as intimate partner violence begin at adolescence and recognize adolescence to be the right time to address the topic of sexual violence. Different authors recommend a school program that teaches students about gender equality and healthy relationship dynamics, especially for girls (Kernsmith & Hernandez-Jozefowics, 2011; Leach, 2006; Leach & Mitchell, 2006; Sundaram, 2014). Although boys are also victimized by sexual harassment and assault, different literature emphasizes that sexual harassment of girls is significantly more prevalent (George, 2006; Kernsmith and Hernandez-Jozefowics, 2011). Girls need to feel safe at schools and to receive the education that prepares them to face the challenges of their future. Sexual harassment is part of their present, a challenge to their future, and in their future. Therefore, teachers and school leaders need training that prepares them to respond to sexual harassment in ways that recognize the grassrooted issues and broader context of gender inequality.

Shakeshaft (2018) explains that while the #MeToo movement grew because of the women who spoke up and exposed their harassers, minors at schools cannot be expected to speak up in the same way. The author emphasizes that this is the adults' responsibility primarily referring to school leaders and teachers. Schools must first acknowledge that there is a problem in order to consider solutions and allocate responsibilities. Ron Edmonds (1979 as cited in Shakeshaft, 2018) discussed the main barrier to school improvement as the lack of will to act. The lack of will to act and educate against sexual harassment at schools can be explained by the staff's blurry understanding of sexual violence and gender inequality. It can also be due to the lack of information about cases since the information is neither being actively collected nor invited. The gender of teachers and school leaders can also influence their response to sexual harassment. Although men are less likely to relate to the issue of sexual harassment, women also

express sexist opinions in Egypt and engage in victim blaming. Furthermore, if the information makes itself available, Sanchez et al. (2001) and Shakeshaft (2018) describe the school leaders' attitude as passive for not knowing the right approach to the issue.

In regard to attitudes, Sundaram (2014) presents the two views of students towards prevention of sexual violence: schools can do nothing, and schools can do something. The author elaborates that the students who perceive schools to have a role in prevention were only able to think of interventive disciplinary measures. The students who perceive schools as unable to prevent sexual violence was explained by their granted view on violence as unpreventable. In both views though, the school is perceived to have no or limited potential in sexual violence prevention, with its role only understood by the students in a reactive manner. This is reflective of the attention and action that students witness in response to sexual harassment cases at schools. In the context of this research too, the stories shared by @AssaultPolice on Instagram show that students and former students have had little trust in their schools' willingness to act which can change through a proactive and explicit addressing of the issue at schools. Schools should therefore recognize their potential by building the capacity of the educators and adopting suitable approaches in their commitment to SHP.

3.4 Levels of Sexual Harassment Prevention in Schools

It is common for school leaders to address the topic of sexual harassment only after facing an incident in an urgent manner. Additionally, when school leaders eventually attend to the topic, they often believe that few sessions that are facilitated by specialists to students will prevent recurrences (Hyde et al., 2011). The response approach is criticized by Hyde et al. (2011) for being non-feminist and ineffective for prevention. The authors recommend that school leaders should utilize the available feminist research which emphasize a comprehensive and consistent framework for change. Hyde et al. (2011) emphasize that adolescence is the ideal time to educate youth about positive gender attitudes and behaviors which makes schools the best medium to take on this responsibility. The authors explain that learning about respectful relationships at school is one example of primary prevention of gender-based violence. This caters to one of the main aims of this thesis where teaching about respect and equality of all genders will combat sexism and eventually prevent sexual harassment at schools and in society.

Carmody et al. (2009) state a classification of three levels of prevention of sexual violence: primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention programs strive to prevent assaults through activities that change mindsets of assault tolerance, raise awareness and address gender inequality in society. Secondary prevention programs involve the intervention occurring in response to violence where immediate action is taken to stop the violence and process the consequences. Tertiary prevention programs involve long term management of the consequences of the violence. It focuses on working with the victims to overcome the harm caused by the violence, and on future prevention of similar incidents within a certain context or community. The primary level is the only actual preventive level, while the secondary and tertiary are better described as interventions and reactive. However, through a consistent commitment to applying strict procedures in secondary level and reevaluation in tertiary level that they likely contribute to future prevention.

At a school setting, primary prevention can include teaching activities that address sexism and challenge gender bias, having a strict policy with enforcing procedures, and clear communication of anti-harassment (or more broadly, violence) culture. Secondary prevention at school involves the functioning of a reporting system in case of harassment, ensuring the safety of the victim, starting immediate investigations and transparent processing of the harassment case. Tertiary prevention efforts at school can involve providing the victim with psychological and emotional support, consequences for the perpetrators, revising school policy, communication or hiring processes to minimize future risks, and reflection by the school leaders and teachers on their primary and secondary prevention efforts. With particular emphasis on schools, Greytak (2003) presents an alternative categorization of prevention programs as control programs and educational programs. The control programs entail policies for processing violence cases, increased security measures, and discipline strategies. Educational programs however, which the author recommends as more effective, focus on changing the behaviors and mindsets of students.

In line with the phrase *prevention is better than the cure*, primary prevention of sexual harassment in schools is the ultimate hope. In an environment where primary prevention efforts are vigorous, girls can feel safe while learning. In agreement with Sparks and Bar On (1985) remark about violence prevention versus response, “knowledge that one can fight if attacked is a very different kind of security from enjoying a certainty that one will not be attacked at all” (p.9). Furthermore, Leach and Mitchell (2006) emphasize that teachers are often at the core of all prevention processes where they create change through contextual strategies. The UNESCO

guide on stopping violence in schools (2009) recommends that teachers become aware of gender inequality and challenge their biases. While all the literature cited acknowledges the need to involve and train teachers, there has not been a located source that presents the requirements and details of such training. Hence in the next chapter, theoretical concepts relating to classroom pedagogy and the teachers' role in SHP will be presented.

4. Theoretical Framework: Key Concepts for Sexual Harassment Prevention

In this chapter, I explore four different concepts and theories as shown in Figure 2 to inform the interpretation and discussion of the research findings. This theoretical framework involves the concept of feminist pedagogy (section 4.1) to guide teaching and the school institution towards compassionate and caring community building. Moreover, the concept of anti-oppressive pedagogy (section 4.2) that is inspired by critical theory will be discussed, since sexual harassment in schools is vulnerable to oppression by teachers, school leadership, families, and society. Additionally, the role theory (section 4.3) is utilized in this theoretical framework to inform how teachers can be change agents who address social issues of schools and society through their teaching. Finally, concepts of school culture and the implicit curriculum (section 4.4) conclude the theoretical framework. Since each school holds within its environment norms and values, the school culture thus plays a crucial role in the primary prevention or intervention in social issues such as bullying, harassment or discrimination.

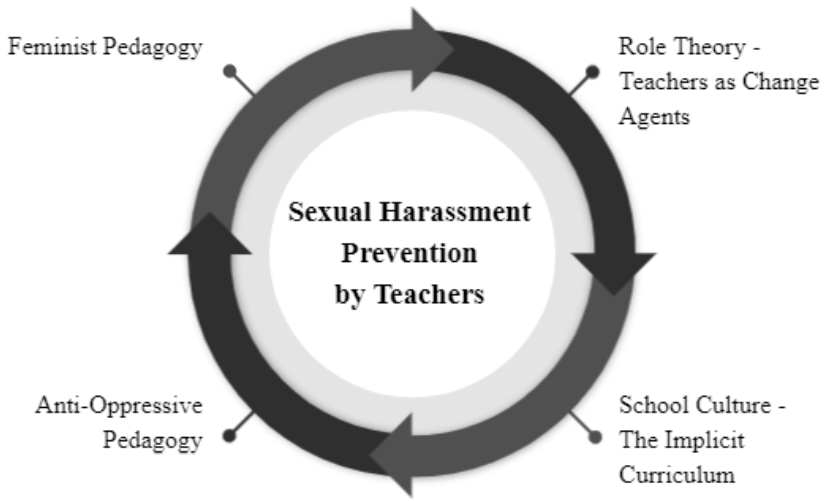


Figure 2 - Concepts in Theoretical Framework

4.1 Feminist Pedagogy

In the 1980s, feminist literature was insufficiently linked to the educational practice (Crawley, Lewis & Mayberry, 2008). Interestingly, feminist pedagogy according to Weiner (2006) did not emerge from feminist scholarship but rather from an urge expressed by university and schoolteachers to combat sexism in their classrooms. Feminist pedagogy is therefore a reaction to the insufficient engagement with gender in pedagogical thinking (Luke & Gore, 1992 as cited in Weiner, 2006). In line with the feminist reforms in the western world since the 1970s, feminist pedagogy has gradually become a recognized approach to teaching and educational institutions (Crawley et al., 2008). Pedagogy entails the values, strategies and methods used for learning (Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999). Feminist pedagogy is associated to Carolyn Shrewsbury who imagined a classroom where everyone works collaboratively and is respectful of one another. In a feminist pedagogy classroom, all voices are included and valued with feminist ideas being integrated into the curriculum and teaching strategies (McCusker, 2017). In hooks's (1994) description of a critical and feminist pedagogy, the classroom community should value each individual's presence and contribution. Feminist pedagogy lacks one distinct definition but rather has been understood through scholars' descriptions and reflections on their practice. Feminist pedagogy as an approach manifests in line with different feminisms. McCusker (2017) mentions that feminist pedagogy is formed according to the context of every unique classroom and the goals guiding their practice. Generally, feminist pedagogy in the 1970s according to Mcleod (1998) promoted a teaching practice that is non-sexist and expected teacher to develop their understanding of gender. Feminist pedagogy does not provide specific teaching strategies and tips for teachers to follow, it rather provides a lens of embracing complexity and subjectivity in teaching (McCusker, 2017). Through teaching, the teachers are encouraged to bring the students awareness to issues of gender inequality and promote social change on the individual and collective levels (Mcleod, 1998).

Feminist pedagogy is derived from critical pedagogy and shares some of its components such as democratic participation and emancipation. Critical pedagogies involve feminist pedagogy, queer pedagogy, and an anti-oppressive pedagogy among other pedagogies that can be utilized according to each context and oppressed groups in a learning environment (Weiner, 2006). The attention that feminist pedagogy however gives to the struggles of women is a distinguishing factor from other critical pedagogies (McCusker, 2017). Feminist pedagogy provides teachers with the opportunity to utilize theory in improving their practice to become more inclusive and

empowering for girls (Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999). One aspect of the feminist pedagogy approach to teaching is reflexivity in the classroom. Teachers should continuously reflect on their practice and initiate discussions with the students that are based on questioning (Crawley et al., 2008). The teachers should be engaged with their reflexivity authentically and display openness towards their success and failures. In feminist pedagogy, teachers design assignments and lessons that address power imbalance for empowerment and inclusion of all students (Crawley et al., 2008). Feminist pedagogy whether in research like this thesis, or in teaching practice should entail a purpose of social change (Crawley et al., 2008). In a similar stance, Schoeman (2015) presents six principles for feminist pedagogy as "the reformation of the teacher-learner relationship, empowerment, community building, voice privileging, respect for the diversity of personal experience, and the challenging of the traditional pedagogical notions" (p. 5).

Providing a useful categorization, Jones (2011 as cited in Ollis, 2017) identified four feminist orientations to teaching sexuality education as conservative, liberal, critical, and postmodern. In this categorization, different teaching practices are informed by different feminist discourses. The conservative orientation teacher aims at maintaining the existing structures, values traditions and shows little interest in changing society. The methods are teachers-centered often with one-way knowledge transmission. The liberal orientation teacher is a facilitator who wishes to extract the students' existing conceptions and knowledge through discussions and debates. It aspires to enhance their decision-making skills and adopts a gender-neutral approach in teaching where genders are not assumed certain roles. The critical orientation teacher centers their approach around social justice and equality. The teaching activities address social issues where students are prompted to recognize and respond to using curricular material that shows alternative discourse, centers marginalized voices and refers to popular culture. The fourth and last orientation of Jones, is the postmodern teacher who leads a learning process of deconstruction and reconstruction of notions such as truth and reality in topics of gender and sexuality. It utilizes theory to explore various perspectives where the teacher assumes the role of a 'devil's advocate' (Ollis, 2017, p.5). By default, most teachers in the Egyptian context would fit with the conservative orientation due to the conservative culture and the limited sex education content in the curriculum. My speculation based on my experience in the Egyptian context would be that while the majority of teachers follow a conservative orientation, fewer teachers can adopt a liberal orientation to provoke thinking and challenge assumptions. It is important to recognize these orientations as a guiding approach for teachers rather than a curriculum. While

feminist pedagogy does not dictate a specific curriculum, it offers these orientations and commits to certain themes to guide the practice.

Feminist pedagogy involves a theme of focusing on women in the teaching content through relating to women's experiences or exploring work by women and women achievements (Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999). Other themes of feminist pedagogy are empowering the students and including their voices in the educational process. Feminist pedagogy also emphasizes the non-neutrality of curriculum or educational settings where every aspect of the educational process should be inspected from a gender and power dimension (Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999). Hyde et al. (2011) promote a feminist structural framework as a guide to violence prevention at schools. In 1983, Barbara Smith (as cited in Fields, 2007) stated that teachers need to be courageous in order to address sexism in their classrooms. According to Fields (2007), for teachers to teach with a critical feminist lens, teachers need to first acquire knowledge on gender and sexuality, power imbalance and inequality. Having acquired the knowledge and gathered the courage to combat sexism, the teachers can then initiate conversations about oppression of genders, sexuality, and body autonomy. Training for this pedagogy can contribute to the incorporation of feminist scholarship in the curriculum and in teaching practice.

4.2 Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy

Sexual harassment prevalence is not an individual offence, but a systemic weapon of oppression used by men to maintain the power imbalance and patriarchal social order. According to Bowles and Gintis (1976 as cited in Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019), schools mirror their societies as sites that practice and normalize inequalities. Hyde et al. (2011) thus explain that prevention of sexual violence programs in schools must address underlying gender inequalities and power relations in society and its reflection in schools. As a double-edged weapon that can oppress or liberate, Heringer (2020) refers to Ruitenberg (2016) and Todd (2003) describe schools as places that orient the children on being in the world. Teaching within any classroom does not occur in a void but rather in alignment with the school's vision, and more importantly with society's purpose for education (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). Heringer (2020) also states that teaching is not a neutral process but rather transmits certain "assumptions, privileges and biases" to students (p.50). In this notion, hooks (1994) describes teaching as "an act of resistance" if teachers adopt a pedagogy that examines assumptions in the curriculum (p.10). Teachers therefore in this understanding of schooling, interpret a curriculum that

carries an agenda according to their own worldview and beliefs. The teachers in the Egyptian context understand that some topics are sensitive and stigmatized. It is considered common sense for teachers in Egypt not to address topics of sex, or religion and politics beyond the textbooks.

An educational system of a certain society might enforce different areas such as competition, scientific advancement, or social justice according to the priorities of the government. The school's vision and culture are informed by the state's ideologies and wider context of society through an implied understanding of a 'system' which affects the teaching practice (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). In 1990, Biggs (as cited in Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019) explained the concept of constructive alignment which is the process of educational design that entails a set of learning outcomes in mind. Constructive alignment hence encourages curriculum designers and teachers to plan for the students' construction of 'certain' learning (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). Examples of learning outcomes that can be planned for in a constructive alignment approach include digital literacy, critical thinking or problem solving where the curriculum encourages teachers to nurture these outcomes amongst students. This concept of constructive alignment however has been utilized by teachers to integrate a limited view on learning that is skills-based or subject-specific. According to Dedotsi and Paraskevopoulou-Kollia (2019), the concept also has potential to design for students' construction of learning with outcomes of investigating their assumptions and actions. Values such as respect and equality can be adopted by the teachers in the context of this research where curricular interpretation and lesson planning actively seek to enhance these values.

In thinking about oppression and gender inequalities that occur at schools, one should then consider the broader social context that inspires the schools to operate a certain way and influences its teaching. Kumashiro (2000) also explains the different ways oppression occurs within school settings and how researchers have articulated oppression in education. Kumashiro (2000) describes two forms of how oppression occurs at schools. One form of oppression is explicit through actions while the other form entails subtle assumptions and ideas about the other. Research on oppression in schools discusses dynamics of privilege and power through a critical, feminist, or queer lens. It investigates the harm done on the weaker group by staff or peers. Another kind of research discusses the oppression occurring through expectations, assumed roles or due to fear of violence. Theologou (2005 as cited in Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019) describes schools as society's main socialization tool of youth to retain existing power structures. This thus equally emphasizes the school's potential in educating for social

change. Education that takes place inside classrooms today has become fixed on delivering a curriculum that includes social norms of existing structures (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). An education that refrains from reproducing the same knowledge, behaviors and attitudes needs a radical pedagogy where learners can then change society (Giroux, 1981 as cited in Heringer, 2020). Classrooms can, instead of blindly reproducing norms and inequalities, utilize a pedagogy of anti-oppression to create social change.

Similar to feminist pedagogy, anti-oppressive pedagogy is also derived from Paulo Freirei's critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire is recognized for his critical anti-oppressive pedagogy and for merging theory with practice in his writings (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). Freire's anti-oppressive writings were criticized for focusing on class and disregarding other oppressions such as gender. It is claimed that the critique he received for disregarding gender from his work had been addressed by him later on (Schugurensky, 2011 as cited in Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). In response to this critique of Freire, hooks (1994) describes the sexist language in Freire's work as "a blindspot in the vision of men who have profound insights" (p.49). hooks remarks, however, that this language should not discourage feminists from engaging with his work because of the value in critical pedagogy for feminist pedagogy. Additionally, hooks (1994) encourages feminists to make use of the critical interrogation aspect of Freire's critical pedagogy where his work is open for critique but should not, according to hooks, be entirely dismissed. Similarly, Weiler (1991) mentions that Freire's writing did not examine the teacher's or students' placement in the oppressive structure, and how their position of relative power according to age, class or gender can influence their pedagogy. Despite Freire's lack of recognizing the hierarchy and intersectionality within oppressive structures, Weiler (1991) perceives value for feminist theory in the inheritance of his work since feminist pedagogy and Freire's anti-oppressive critical pedagogy share similar values and aims. Weiler (1991) recommends that Freire's work should be revisited to incorporate feminist pedagogy.

Freire's anti-oppressive pedagogy entails elements of deconstruction and reconstruction as a disruption of assumptions. The pedagogical process engages students in their learning and emphasizes critical reflection on historical assumptions, reality, and their experiences (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). Through the students and the teacher's engagement in this learning process can they comprehend their contribution to history, change oppressive discourses and recognize the power of their actions. Anti-oppressive education according to Kumashiro (2000) "requires disruptive knowledge, not simply more knowledge" (p.34). Accordingly, Kumashiro (2000) presents four approaches to anti-oppressive pedagogy with different

foci. The first approach is *education for the other* which tries to reduce the oppression experienced by marginalized groups and individuals in schools. 'Education for the other' hence inspects the ways that others are treated at schools including the expectations that are set for them. The second approach is *education about the other* which focuses on the discourses in the curriculum which can reinforce the mainstream norm or contribute to a partial understanding of the other. The third approach is *education that is critical of privileging and othering* which directs its focus from the other to the privileged ones. This approach is critical of the maintained structures of privileges. Schools in this approach should be self-critical of their reproduction of privilege and inequality. The fourth approach is *education that changes students and society* which examines how common discourses and references of these discourses reproduce oppression. In considering sexual harassment as an oppressive phenomenon that works to maintain a power imbalance and gender inequality, the four mentioned approaches are then applicable to the dismantle the phenomenon. If teachers in the Egyptian context recognize their potential in dismantling sexual harassment as an oppressive phenomenon, they can work to improve the safety of the learning environment, interpret the curriculum to challenge oppressive discourses about gender, ensure the fair and equal treatment of girls at schools, and extend the curriculum to address sexual harassment and sexism.

In response to Kumashiro (2000), Butin (2002) criticizes the simplistic view of anti-oppressive education where students and teachers are assumed to rise above their positionality, focus on the marginalized and reinterpret the mainstream discourses to avoid repetition of oppression. Butin (2002) further argues that teachers and students are neither rational nor autonomous. Schools are players in reproducing oppression and can be resistant to anti-oppressive agents that disrupt the norms from the inside. An interesting statement by Butin (2002) describes a reality of overcoming structural oppression where it states that "Just as students do not succeed or fail on their own, neither do teachers come to oppress or liberate on their own" (p.15). Also, the individuals involved in learning have varying capacities to unlearn and approach alternative discourses with openness and will to reconstruct their knowledge (Butin, 2002). Additionally, anti-oppressive education can manifest to silence resistance. Foucault (1977 as cited in Butin, 2002) thus remarks that the anti-oppressive discourse itself should be inspected for oppression in order to reach a constructive practice of anti-oppression education. In the context of this research, the anti-oppression of women discourse is far from becoming dominant or oppressive due to its recent emergence. Truly for Egypt, teachers who pioneer a commitment to anti-oppression in their pedagogy can face resistance from the surrounding environment of parents and

school leaders, and possibly students too. These teachers would need training on addressing sensitive topics and issues of social justice in their classrooms in order to be able to defend their practice.

4.3 Role Theory: Teachers as Change Agents

Some teachers might only understand their role in functional terms of textbook delivery and subject instruction. The teachers' (as an individual) understanding of their role can inform how they behave in the school (as the social organization) (Turner, 2002). When it comes to sexual harassment at schools, teachers might assume neutrality or unaccountability to the violence that they do not inflict. Meyer (2006) highlights that teachers have the most access to students and are able to monitor and react to incidents of sexual harassment promptly. The teachers can integrate the topic in the curriculum and address it critically, but must first develop their understanding of gender-based violence and the school's policies. In discussing how teachers perceive their responsibility towards sexual harassment, Robinson (2005) explains that teachers in the Australian context often perceive sexual harassment amongst students as joking around or boys 'teasing' girls. This neutrality towards sexual harassment encourages the boys' behaviors and underestimates the pain inflicted on the victims of harassment. When confronted with their passiveness, Robinson (2005) highlights that teachers participate in blaming the victims and make excuses for the boys' behaviors as part of their development to avoid accountability for not putting an end to the harassment. Rinehart and Espelage (2016) explain that teachers who actively or unknowingly show sexism in the classrooms contribute to students' reluctance to report their harassment. The authors mention that when teachers discriminate between boys and girls or respond passively towards incidents of harassment, the students are less likely to seek their support.

Teachers are not only responsible for curriculum delivery, but also for the social and emotional learning of the students (UNESCO, 2014). The teachers have various responsibilities besides instruction such as safeguarding the students, offering guidance and coaching for improved behaviors of communication and conflict resolution. Within the globalised pressures of today, teachers are expected to extend their knowledge about a variety of areas. Their role was previously abiding to the local community's needs, yet teaching practice and teacher education today are being informed by different technologies, social movements, global pressures and a global-

ised imaginary of schools and learning. While Dedotsi and Paraskevopoulou-Kollia (2019) explain the teacher's role to have changed in quantitative terms of increasing standards, Sunnari et al. (2003) priorly mentioned that depending on the context, teachers are increasingly expected to take on the role of an intellectual professional who adapts their teaching practice to address the political, economic and environmental issues in society and the world at large. The teacher's role is also expected to address social and cultural issues that violate human rights through teaching about equality and morality (Sunnari et al., 2003).

Biddle (1986) and Turner (2002) explain *roles* as a main aspect of interactions in social relationships. People assume different roles in life and for each role, there is an understood set of expectations, standards and behaviors (Biddle, 1986). Role theory helps in predicting and acting expectations in accordance with norms and identities. Role theory has been utilized in exploring a wide range of social issues to understand the behaviors of individuals in organizations (Biddle, 1986; Turner, 2002). Role theory organizes the behaviors of individuals within social networks on an individual level and collective scale (Turner, 2002). Teachers' behaviors at a school are thus informed by the expectations of the role of the teacher in that organization. Role theory entails central concepts to further understand how roles are formed, expected, played and changed. One concept in discussing role theory is consensus which holds the notion that a role is regularly played in a certain way because people expect it to be played this way (Biddle, 1986). An early-career teacher or a newcomer to a school setting, can find their behaviors being automatically shaped by the general consensus surrounding the role and status of the teacher. Consensus however cannot be the only informant of a role especially in the case where a role should change to disrupt dominant power. This is relevant to this research, because a teacher who attempts to actualize their potential in social change or address inequalities might not be met with consensus but rather resistance. Another concept of role theory is conformity which can explain how a person learns about the expectations of their role through imitation and is assessed through the degree of conformity. Newcomb and Dahrendorf (1950; 1973 as cited in Turner, 2002) navigate the variation within conformity by categorizing behaviors of roles as obligatory, optional and forbidden roles. In applying conformity to the teacher's role in Egypt, teachers are often held to a higher moral standard where boundaries between their personal choices and professional identities are blurred. Teachers are assumed to play the role of a role-model mirroring the desirable behaviors and attitudes of traditional Egyptian society. Thus, the school's context and culture imply certain obligatory, optional, and forbidden roles for the teacher.

A key concept of role theory is role conflict which occurs from non-consensus towards how a role is being played. It starts a process of negotiation and results in a balance point between coping and disruption. A teacher who aspires to change their pedagogical approach or establish relationships with students that are different from the school culture will enter a process of negotiation with colleagues, parents, leaders and possibly students too. The teacher can find a balance through coping with the school culture while disrupting the norms through insistence and arguing. Turner (1990) discusses another relevant concept to this research which is role change. Role change is explained by Turner (1990) not as modifications in the specifics of the role being played, but rather a shift and possibly a contradiction in the expectations of the role. Role change extends beyond the regular variation to disrupt the assumed boundaries of the role. The role can change qualitatively through reinterpretation to include new expectations, or quantitatively through more or less responsibilities (Turner, 1990). An example of a qualitative change to the teachers' role can be the focus of this thesis where teachers become responsible for changing students' sexist attitudes and nurturing a respectful classroom community. Quantitative changes can include incorporating new assessments, increased documentation, change in schedule, and having more or less students. Every role however is played within a larger set or role, so role change often impacts other roles which causes conflict or resistance (Turner, 2002). For example, changes to the employee role affect the manager's role, changes to the woman's role affect the man's role and changes to the teacher's role affect the student's role.

Francis and Le Roux (2011) emphasize the teachers' role in combating oppressive structures and inspiring social justice amongst their students. Heijden, Geldens, Beijaard and Popeijus (2018) discuss the importance of teachers who recognize and practice their agency for positive change and school improvement, and can match the increasing demands of the teacher's role. Particularly, teachers who perceive themselves as social justice educators recognize their role in dismantling unequal social structures at school and society (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2005; Schey & Uppstrom, 2009 as cited in Picower, 2015). These teachers who care about social justice are political agents of change who alongside subject delivery assume a responsibility for social change (Picower, 2015). Francis and Le Roux (2011) additionally mention that teachers of social justice education believe in the school's role for social change. O'Sullivan (2008) however mentions that most teachers acquired their education from the same system they are to be employed in. Teachers as potential change agents are in fact socialized by the same structures of oppression and inequality they are to criticize and challenge.

Heijden et al. (2015) explain the teacher's role as a change agent as a professional who contributes to school improvement for positive change. Change agents according to the authors are motivated individuals who integrate their activism in their teaching and at school-level action. Hattie (2012 as cited in Heijden et al., 2015) describes the teacher change agent as someone who has a certain 'mindset' on their role. Lane, Lacefield-Parachini, and Isken (2003 as cited in Woodrow & Caruana, 2017) refer to teachers who are change agents as "teachers against the grain" (p.41). Similarly, Cochran-Smith (1991 as cited in Woodrow & Caruana, 2017) describes a teacher change agent as someone who is reflective and is conscious of dismantling oppressive systems in their context. In regard to consciousness, Woodrow and Caruana (2017) cite Nieto and McDonough (2011) in their emphasis on the teachers' critical consciousness to actualize their potential for social change. The authors explain that only through having critical consciousness can a teacher be critical and disruptive of inequality and oppression at schools, or actively teach against its prevalence in society.

Heijdan et al. (2018) recommend that all teachers come to understand their role as change agents. The authors however highlight a gap in research to understand and describe teachers' agency. While Francis and Le Roux (2011) state that the extent of agency is affected by the context surrounding the teachers, the authors also emphasize that agency is an attribute that requires professional development from the individual's side to be actualized. Teachers who will combat sexism in their classrooms must first understand the issues attached to gender inequality in order to recognize their role (Francis & Le Roux, 2011). Woodrow and Caruana (2017) emphasize the importance that teacher education programs integrate capacity building of teachers' change agency. The teacher education programs should include components where social issues are addressed to allow teachers to inspect their values and positions amidst the existing system (Woodrow & Caruana, 2017). This inspection process is referred to as 'perspective transformation' by Woodrow and Caruana (2017). Perspective transformation involves the teachers revisiting their positions and worldviews after acquiring new knowledge and engaging with new topics (Woodrow & Caruana, 2017). The teachers should also explore how their values and mindsets will inform their teaching practice (Hammerness et al., 2005 as cited in Woodrow & Caruana, 2017).

William Ayers (1998 as cited in Francis & Le Roux, 2011) describes social justice education as engagement of the students with issues of inequality, oppression, and liberty. Research on social justice education often involves the practice of teachers in the classrooms and how they can address inequality at schools (Picower, 2015). Picower (2015) however argues that the

teachers' work towards social justice must include an action component that extends beyond the classroom borders. O'Sullivan (2008) states that teachers who are change agents should make connections between individual decisions and social structures of society. The teachers should be able to criticize and facilitate discussions on society without only being limited to the individual scope. According to O'Sullivan (2008), teachers should connect the activism and movements that occur outside of the school to their teaching. Picower (2015) describes the social justice educator's relationships with the students to be caring and empathetic. The teachers empathize with the students' challenges in overpowering oppressive structures, yet work to empower them to take action. The students in a social justice classroom recognize their potential as active agents of change rather than passive individuals. Westheimer and Suurtamm (2008 as quoted in Picower, 2005) describe the teacher's role in social justice education as "to equip students with the knowledge, behavior, and skills needed to transform society into a place where social justice can exist' (p. 590, p. in picower?). Teachers as activists for social justice should exert their efforts both inside and outside of their classrooms (Picower, 2015). Action outside of the classroom can include changing the school's unequal procedures or policy, aligning the parents and engaging with the local community. Francis and Le Roux (2011) discuss how the context in which the teacher works within can influence the teacher's agency. Teachers work amidst conditions which affect the extent of their agency and ability to utilize their pedagogy for social action. Ayers (1998 as cited in Francis & Le Roux, 2011) however states that teachers are also able to influence the context that they work within.

4.4 School Culture: The Implicit Curriculum

In regard to school context, Wozolek (2020) describes society and schools as settings where a hidden curriculum of violence is taught and learnt. This curriculum is also present in schools as part of societal institutions, and is learnt through a collective wholesome of violence and not individual occurrences. The normality of violence in society is a core component of that curriculum to the extent that dismantling or resisting this violent structure is seen as rebellious. Wozolek (2020) explains that the hidden curriculum of violence manifests through passing on attitudes and behaviors across generations, and also through intra-actions. The author argues that an interaction often refers to a single act of violence where the curriculum of violence should be understood through a broader scope of intra-actions. Intra-actions involve everyone in society, even individuals who perceive themselves as neither victims nor perpetrators. The

author refers to the #MeToo movement as an example of how sexual violence feeds on collective contributions by everyone even if an individual's contribution is their silence.

School leadership as described by Ryu, Walls and Louis (2020) involves functional assignments and relationships responsibilities. Schools, according to the authors, have a social wellbeing responsibility that extends beyond academic achievement. The authors explain that each relationship within a school contributes to its culture. School leadership then should not only inspect individual relationships between two students or teachers but rather consider the nature of the entirety of all relationships (Ryu et al., 2020). In light of relationships in schools, Inlay (2016) describes the school culture to include "the behaviors of individuals within the school which convey messages of the implicit or hidden curriculum of a school" (p. 23). Rinehart and Espelage (2016) describe that implicit curriculum packaged within the school culture to involve "values, goals, norms, expectations, teaching practices, leadership styles, and bureaucratic structure of a school" (p.2). Additionally, Leach et al. (2003) emphasizes the dynamicity of school culture where it is continuously informed by social norms and interactions that occur on premises during the school day. School culture is therefore acquired by students and staff through the implicit curriculum of how individuals socialize, the priorities demonstrated, and the values shown through decision making (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997). It is powerful, reproductive, and continuous unless intentional and explicit measures are taken to change it.

The school environment according to Griffin (2018) should reflect a culture of respect that manifests through equality and inclusion of all students and teachers. Inlay (2016) also emphasizes the value of teaching and modeling respectful relationships at schools. The author explains that effective teaching of respect occurs through engaging with the students' attitudes and values to improve their behavior. Adolescents particularly need to observe their teachers model respect and not only preach it (Inlay, 2016). Similarly, Noddings (1984) states that the priority of schools should be the promotion of caring relationships. Education should essentially foster morality and caring relationships within its community and schools thus, it should consider it its main aim to guide its culture and practice. A caring teacher as described by Noddings (2012) can demonstrate their care through relationships with the students, dedication to their work, or adapting their teaching methods to serve the students' needs. Furthermore, Noddings (2012) describes the caring classroom as one where social issues are addressed. The students and teachers in a caring classroom of Noddings prioritize being good people and empathize with one another. Therefore, empathy is considered key in creating caring classrooms and a school culture. Heringer (2020) is skeptical about how this discourse by Noddings (1984) can contribute

to anti-oppression. Heringer (2020) criticizes that ethics of care for a caring and compassionate school environment is focused on the relationship with the self rather than being about the other. Empathy however, according to Noddings's explanation (2012), should not be taught as centering the self but rather through centering the other. It is additionally important for teachers and students to exert sufficient time in understanding the others rather than assume their needs.

In specific discussions of school culture and sexual violence, Leach (2006) describes schools as a location that extends the gender inequality and violence present in the outside society. Pinheiro (2006) states that schools with sexual violence mirror a violent society and reflect an implicit curriculum that fosters gender inequality. Implicit curriculum and school values should be included in the conversation of changing the school's response and education against sexual harassment. Teachers and school leaders transmit gendered ideas and behaviors to the students (Griffin, 2018). School staff that take boys aggression as granted and natural, and expect passiveness and tolerance from girls, reproduce gender inequality that leads to gender based violence such as sexual harassment. Young et al. (2009) emphasize that through an assessment of school culture, the severity of violence occurrences can be predicted. School culture in gender unequal societies, according to the author, continues to normalize the values and behaviors that are perceived as social norms and teach them to minors to carry them to adulthood.

In every school, there is an implied gender dynamic that is present in every educational institution which all staff and students understand and abide by without ever having been taught the specifics of it (Leach et al., 2003). For example, the gendered differences in behavioral expectations by teachers from students, and the roles assigned to different genders imply biases and stereotypes. In the Egyptian context for example, boys almost exclusively play football and girls are expected to find something else to play during physical education lessons. In middle and high school stages, girls must attend home economics lessons where they learn sewing and cooking while boys study another subject such as maintenance or agriculture. The school culture in a notion similar to that of Butler's performativity is also continuously reproduced by all actors to maintain the power structure and hierarchy within the school. A school culture that is sexist or passive towards gender inequality is comprehended by the students where victims of sexual harassment are thus unlikely to report or seek the help of the school staff (Leach, 2006). Sexual harassment becomes accepted as part of the culture where no consequences will be imposed, nor action taken against the harasser. While teachers and school leaders might not feel responsible for the violence, an attitude of neutrality is an enabler of further harassment which poses responsibility on them (Leach, 2006). The implicit curriculum of a school should thus be

inspected with a gender lens in order to mitigate its bias and stereotypes. Griffin (2018) states that even teachers who actively challenge their biases and treat everyone similarly, still hold some gendered assumptions and ideas that impact their teaching.

Rinehart and Espelage (2016) describe five aspects of the school environment that impact the victimization of sexual harassment at a school. The first aspect is the schoolteachers' willingness to respond to sexual harassment cases. The second aspect is the explicit commitment of the entire school staff to address the issue of sexual harassment. The third aspect is the school's leadership involvement with the topic and prioritizing school safety. The fourth aspect is the perceived overall positive relationships among members of the school community including principals, teachers, parents and students. The fifth and last aspect of the school environment is its dedication to promote gender equality. These five aspects as presented by the Rinehart and Espelage (2016) contribute to the occurrence and extent of sexual harassment at school. The school environment is implicitly understood by all school members, including the students. Thus, a positive environment that demonstrates these five aspects will according to the authors experience less sexual harassment incidents. Griffin (2018) emphasizes the need for schools to establish strong partnerships with the families. The partnership will help align the families with the school's efforts and values of gender equality. Activities to strengthen this partnership will also help predict or resolve conflicts that may arise from different religious and cultural views.

The theoretical framework in this chapter presented four different but interrelated concepts as relevant to the topic of sexual harassment prevention at schools by particularly focusing on the role of teachers. If teachers embrace feminist pedagogy and anti-oppressive pedagogy in their teaching, transform their view on their role to recognize their change agency, and examine their contribution to the school culture towards a safe and non-sexist learning environment, then these concepts will work together to actualize the teacher's potential in SHP. Through teachers adopting themes of feminist pedagogy that promote feminist ideas of gender equality, the classrooms can become more respectful at the present and the students become more peaceful in the future. Simultaneously, by the teachers' commitment to a critical and anti-oppressive pedagogy, that school procedures, relationships and curricula can be changed. Anti-oppressive pedagogy can also inspire teachers who embrace it to resist and change sexist discourses in the curriculum and school culture to mitigate dominant oppressive structures. The teachers however cannot learn and adopt feminist and anti-oppressive pedagogies unless they first recognize their potential as change agents. Integrating the role theory to further understand how teachers perceive their role, can help in understanding their current practice within the broader context of society

and state. It can also help in guiding interested teachers to expand and rearrange aspects of their role. Each teacher inside the classroom has a professional practice and an individual identity. Teachers within a school, however, form a collective entity that performs and reproduces the school culture alongside other actors such as principals, parents and students. Since teachers never work in isolation, but within a school setting that has a unique culture, the implicit curriculum that teachers teach in parallel should be thus examined and brought to critical light for evaluation and reflection. Through understanding the four concepts presented in this chapter, sexual harassment prevention (SHP) at schools by teachers can be informed and improved.

5. Methodology: Phenomenography

5.1 Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

The research design for this work is interpretive constructivist in inquiry and critical in discussion. Interpretive research studies the world through the meanings interpreted from people's interactions and perceptions. The interpretive nature of the methodology used, being a phenomenographic inquiry, centers the individual's insights at the core (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). It seeks their contextual perspectives as data to understand how they understand a phenomenon, here being SHP, and thus their approach towards it. A social foundation of which phenomenography is based upon is Schutz's (1932/1967 as cited in Richardson, 1999) idea that social meanings can only be understood through its participants' recounts. Phenomenography according to Ference Marton (as cited in Richardson, 1999) belongs to the 'realist interpretation' which believes in a reality of which we can only understand through the analysis of people's conceptions of it. Conducting interpretations in that way would rely on a SHP reality which can only be understood through the analysis of the teachers' conception of it.

Phenomenography is also aligned with a constructivist approach to knowledge. Constructivism is the theoretical foundation that reality is constructed through the participants' engagement and perceptions with the world (Richardson, 1999). Marton and Booth (1997) discussed two types of constructivism: individual and social. Individual constructivism focuses on the individual participant's experience with the world while social constructivism involves a social process in which different people interact and negotiate their reality in an environment. This research holds the theoretical foundation of social constructivism where the teachers as participants engage

with the phenomenon within a social process and form their understanding of the world through this process. Social constructivism is associated with 'situated cognition' which involves individual learning being continuously shaped by social interactions and the cultural context (Richardson, 1999). This is especially relevant to phenomenography as the methodology has been criticized for disregarding individual contexts in the analysis process (Given, 2012). Marton and Booth (1997) however, simultaneously objected to linking phenomenography to either type of constructivism as they continued to emphasize an existing reality. Marton and Booth (1997) thus adopt a 'nondualist ontology' where the authors emphasize that a reality exists and is experienced differently by different individuals making the reality objective and its various experiences subjective. Phenomenography of the nondualist ontology is interested in the variation of experiences which is the subjective world experiences and perceptions to take the forms of interpretations of the real world and not the construct of it (Uljens, 1996).

Originally, phenomenography had a stronger empirical foundation than a theoretical one (Åkerlind, 2012 as cited in Hajar, 2020). Hajar (2020) discusses and organizes the theoretical foundations of phenomenography and explains its ontology as a non-dualist one where the phenomenographic worldview is relational. Phenomenography refuses a strict binary between how people engage with the world and how they think about it since each informs the other and shapes the individual's unique understanding of their world. Another ontological dimension to phenomenography is its understanding of conceptions. Conceptions are constructed in each person's mind and vary because of the different contexts and social interactions. Thus, phenomenography does not support the understanding of a conception as something static but rather as something that is dynamic and continuously being reconstructed according to the individual's surroundings. Hajar (2020) explains that phenomenography has a 'constitutionalist view of knowledge' epistemology (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999 as cited in Hajar, 2020, p.3). Due to its non-dualist ontology and its constructivist view on conceptions, phenomenographic research studies the variation in human conceptions rather than a fixed reality or knowledge. The epistemology that guides the phenomenographic process is criticized by Webb (1997) for holding a strong belief in the subjectivity of the human experience yet follows an analysis process that results in generalized categories which makes the methodology lean towards a positivist and instrumentalist approach to communicate its findings.

5.2 The Second Order Perspective

Phenomenographic research is written in a second-order perspective where the researcher conducts extensive research about the topic, then proceeds to gather the participants' own perspectives with minimum manipulation from the researcher's part. The second-order perspective is built upon Kant's split of something as it is (noumenon), and something as it appears or is experienced (phenomenon) (Marion, 1978 as cited in Richardson, 1999). The second-order perspective involves the researcher distancing themselves from the phenomenon and re-experiencing (or understanding) it through the participants' perceptions (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Larsson & Holmstrom, 2007; Marton 1981). The second-order perspective is associated with Edmund Husserl's approach to perception as an entire thing that can be bracketed by the researcher. Derrida (1973 as cited in Webb, 1997) states that perception is highly contextual and embedded in everyone's historical and social background. Derrida argues that context, language and backgrounds can neither be bracketed by the researcher nor ignored in the analysis of the participants' perceptions.

Bracketing is a prerequisite for quality phenomenographic research (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). Bracketing is defined by Richardson (1999) as "the suspension of the researcher's cultural values and expectations rather than to the suspension of any existential presuppositions on the part of the participants" (p. 63). Bracketing is essential for the ontological and epistemological foundations to phenomenography which aim at describing the world through a second-order perspective as reported by the participants who engage with the phenomenon. Without active bracketing efforts, the researcher may make errors of dismissing valuable meanings or interpreting language to serve their assumptions without the full embrace of the data. Accordingly in this research, to gather meaning and variation of perceptions from the teachers' experiences, I am required to bracket my presuppositions and existing knowledge to the best of my abilities, as total bracketing is unattainable. Marton (1994 as cited in Ashworth & Lucas, 2000) explains that bracketing compares the experiences and perceptions of the participants to one another and not to the researcher's views. Ashworth and Lucas (2000) provide a practical guide in their work on how early phenomenographers should practice the concept of bracketing. The authors for example mention setting aside previous findings, theories and their personal values and knowledge, and the urge to create causal relationships that can divert from the original interest in categorizing the ways of perceiving and experiencing. In this thesis, I bracket my assumptions about the participants for their age or gender and my personal views around the research topic. I as well recognize my limited capacity to bracket my position as an Egyptian woman,

and the critical feminist lens towards sexual harassment which I adopt throughout the research process.

Given (2012) emphasizes that the validity of the phenomenographic research is connected to the transparency of the research process. As the researcher, I must be reflective and transparent about the prejudices and theories that inform my interpretations and categories of meaning (Bernstein, 1983 as cited in Webb, 1997). Based on Richardson's (1999) suggestions, I conducted this phenomenographic research by thoroughly studying sexual harassment in Egypt prior to the empirical process. In the data collection and analysis stages, I attempted my best effort to bracket my existing perceptions and attitudes towards the phenomenon of sexual harassment but ensured that the research continued to have a clear topic and scope. I strived to remain transparent about the parts of myself I cannot 'bracket' and the ways those parts might influence the research process. As a previous teacher, I hold my own views and experiences with SHP in an Egyptian school setting. It is however important to be aware of my own perceptions on the topic in an attempt to distance myself from it, or address it transparently as appropriate in the research process. While bracketing is highly encouraged in phenomenography, it is equally important to recognize that some ideas will be challenging to bracket, particularly issues of values and beliefs. The research should in principle open their mind to the participants' views and acknowledge the extent of their ability in doing so. In this research, issues of sexual harassment and feminism are main themes where I adopt a transparent position of condemning the first and activating for the latter. It is challenging to claim absolute openness to participants conceptions that verbalize neutrality towards sexual harassment. In response to the challenge of bracketing, Ashworth and Lucas (2000) encourage an approach of empathy. The authors argue that only through empathy can the researcher distance themselves from their own views and open their mind to the participants' worldview.

5.3 Phenomenographic Inquiry

Phenomenography according to Marton (1986) is a qualitative process that studies the varying ways individuals experience and perceive a phenomenon. There are several definitions of phenomenography that are mostly informed by Marton's (1986) definition of phenomenography as a "research approach designed to answer questions about the different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive and understand the world around them" (p.31) In simple

definition, phenomenography explores how different individuals understand a certain phenomenon (Cibangu & Hepworth, 2016). The 'Swedish Martonian' school of phenomenography has always been closely attached to the educational research field as it was originally utilized for research that answers curricular questions, particularly how differently students understand a given concept. Phenomenography however, studies not only the understanding of individuals, but also wider forms of understanding such as experiencing, perceiving or conceptualizing phenomena (Marton 2001 as cited in Kilinc & Aydin, 2013). Phenomenography explores the emerging categories from the data and not on the specific ways a phenomenon is experienced. It locates the focus on the qualitative variation in experiencing the phenomenon with no interest in understanding the phenomenon itself (Åkerlind, 2005; Ashworth & Lucas, 2000; Dortins, 2002; Given, 2012; Marton, 1981; Sin, 2010). Consequently, this research is more interested in how the teachers understand SHP and their actual or potential role towards it.

There are different types of phenomenography (Hasselgren & Beach, 1997 as cited in Cibangu & Hepworth, 2016). This research is aligned with the phenomenological phenomenography type. This type is occupied with peoples' experiences and perceptions about a phenomenon which makes interviews its most common data source. An individual's perception about something is relational and constructed through the person's interaction with the world, which results in several variations of experiences and meaning (Sin, 2010). This research collects the insights of teachers who each had their own background, education, belief system and experiences which influences how they perceive the teacher's role, their political agency for social change and potential for feminist activism. Through the gathering of interview data, categories of similar and different meanings emerge and reveal how individual differences contribute to variations in understanding a phenomenon. Here, teachers will be interviewed to share their different perspectives on SHP in schools. The variation in their perspectives, whether in conceptualization and understanding of sexual assault or in their insights for prevention, shall assist to lead to contextual strategies and measures for sexual assault prevention (Cibangu & Hepworth, 2016; Given, 2012).

Phenomenography seeks the participants' individual understanding to eventually form a collective presentation of those understandings. Phenomenography is interested in differentiating between surface and deep learning (Cibangu & Hepworth, 2016). This is relevant to the curriculum-focused research that was originally associated with phenomenography and studied the different ways of understanding a phenomenon in the curriculum. In this research, the phenomenon being the prevention of sexual harassment, teachers can demonstrate different surface and

deep levels of understanding, rather than of learning. The teachers share insights that reflect varying levels of understanding their role and potential in regard to the phenomenon. For example, one teacher might limit their understanding of their role to reporting an incident according to the school's policy. This approach to the issue reflects a surface-level understanding of their role. Another teacher, however, can be proactively teaching against sexual harassment and adopting feminist activism in their teaching, and forming connections between sexism, good citizenship, and the issue of sexual harassment. The approach of the latter hypothetical teacher reflects a deeper understanding of their role and potential. The participants' understanding and perception of a phenomenon must be connected to their practice in the classrooms as teachers. As Åkerlind (2005) exclaims, "how can one operate outside one's understanding" (p. 66). In the case of this research, an example of a teacher who recognizes the severity of sexual harassment in society and is in touch with their own potential to help combat it, is likely to have different practices and approach in their classroom than a teacher who is yet to make this connection or has an opposing view. This view of teaching reflects my own hope which is also supported by the literature and theoretical framework. It should however, in a bracketing effort from my part, not be imposed on the teachers during the interviews nor in the analysis stage.

Marton (1986) highlights that one importance of phenomenography is to bring awareness of the participants to the variation in perceptions and understanding. In this research, all of the 14 teachers expressed interest in reading the research upon completion. They have also understood from the open-ended nature of the questions that many aspects of this phenomenon are open for interpretation and their own perceptions. This implies predicted variation within their understanding. Marton (1986) states that another aim of the phenomenography is to help researchers, practitioners and participants reach a 'better' way of thinking about a phenomenon through a thorough process of qualitative analysis of the existing ways people report their perceptions on a phenomenon (p. 33).

6. The Empirical Process - Phenomenography in Practice

6.1 Data Collection

I recognize the importance of transparently and elaborately narrating the data collection process for it influences the validity of the work (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). The data collection in this

research includes semi-structured interviews with 14 participants. The interviews allow participants to engage with the topic in private and think aloud of their role as teachers and the school's role in prevention and intervention. Although, there are no specific rules that instruct the researcher on numbers of questions or interviews to conduct in their study (Ashworth &Lucas, 2000), Trigwell (1994;2000 as cited in Åkerlind, 2005) recommends limiting the number of interviews to allow researchers to organize their data and proceed with the research process. In determining the number of interviews, Townsend (2013) discussed the concept of saturation as a criterion for decision making. Saturation in research is reached when no new categories can emerge from the interviews and similar themes are becoming repeated. Designing the research based on the premise of saturation is challenging because a researcher like myself often has a timeline to commit to and must plan for a certain number of participants (Saunders, 2012 as cited in Townsend, 2013).

In this research, by the 10th interview, it was becoming apparent that the insights shared by this sample had been explored, yet the researcher continued to proceed with four additional interviews to enrich the sample size according to methodological recommendations and to commit to the participants who had responded and filled in the consent form. Confidence with reaching saturation is difficult but Saunders and Morse (2012; 1995 as cited in Townsend, 2013) emphasize that lacking saturation does not make the findings invalid, but rather yet to be completely explored. Following more concrete recommendations on the number of participants in qualitative research, I had 14 interviews based on the suggested numbers of Creswell (2007) and Trigwell (2006). While Given (2012) as well as Larsson and Holmstrom (2007) suggest at least 15 or 20 participants, the resources at my disposal for a master's study are limited, especially in times of Covid-19. Furthermore, I felt saturation was reached at 14 participants and was confident in the data I have collected.

6.2 Participants

All teachers were selected based on their voluntary willingness to participate in response to a Facebook and LinkedIn call (Appendix A). Using social media to recruit participants is cost-effective, accessible, and enables a faster outreach than offline methods which can delay the research process (Arigo, Pagoto, Carter-Harris, Lillie & Nebeker, 2018; Gelinas et al., 2017; King, O'Rourke & Delongis, 2014). Gelinas et al. (2017) however state that with the recent popularity of utilizing social media to recruit participants, more research is still necessary to

organize and fully understand the implications of this practice. The authors recommend that an offline alternative to recruit participants should be first identified and then compared to social media recruitment in terms of ethics. In this research, an offline alternative to recruit teachers would have been reaching out by phone to my former colleagues at different schools and asking them to pass on the message. In terms of logistics, following up with former colleagues would have required several phone calls and messages amidst their busy schedules, granted that their information details remained the same. It would have likely delayed my scheduled timeline for data collection. In regard to ethics, I would likely reach out to colleagues whom I had close friendships with and trust their willingness to help which would create a similar pool of participants. The collegial familiarity is also present in the social media recruitment, yet my Facebook post was seen by hundreds of my connections and was shared by 20 users who also have hundreds of connections. Another offline alternative could have been visiting different faculties of education and training centers that offer professional development courses for practicing teachers and requesting to leave a post on notice boards. Although this method could have helped accessing teachers from a broader pool, yet access to universities and private centers in Egypt requires permission from managers who would likely insist to meet prior and discuss my interest in announcing my research at their facility. Additionally, the data collection stage took place in December 2020 amidst the Covid-19 pandemic where online interactions were widely encouraged, and teachers were likely completing their professional development courses online as well. Another timing aspect of using social media is that the women's movement which I consider this thesis to occur in its light, is having its discussions and education online. Therefore, based on my familiarity with the context of general skepticism towards qualitative data collection and predicted logistical challenges, I made the choice to use social media for recruitment of participants.

The participation call was shared to attract teachers who perceive themselves as interested in social change, with the topic of sexual assault prevention clearly stated. At the time of posting the call in September and October 2020, I was still in the process of reviewing the literature about the topic. In the early stage of planning for the research, I used the term ‘assault’ instead of harassment. At a later point, I settled on focusing on harassment to stay in line with the current movement, and to include non-physical harassment that is often excluded from the physical notion of assault. The call also included the time commitment of approximately 45 minutes to meet for the interview, and anonymity was also assured in the text. To find enough participants for the research who are willing to engage with the topic, a snowball approach was

used to support the process. Snowball sampling in qualitative research is used to find participants from populations that are difficult to access by the researcher through utilizing the existing participants' networks (Noy, 2008). In snowball sampling, I invited the participants to inform one another and pass on the recommendation to participate. I was hopeful that it would make the process of finding participants faster and more trusted by potential participants. Although teachers are seemingly an accessible population, I sense general skepticism around participating in primary data collection in Egypt particularly on sensitive topics. The teachers recommended peers whom they recognize as interested in social issues within schools or might have relevant experiences. Eventually, only two of the teachers who participated in the research were accessed via the snowball approach whereas the other 12 have responded to the social media call in an approach that also aligns with the snowball approach. Cautioned by Ashworth and Lucas (2000) emphasis on participant selection, I was aware not to be biased towards participants who likely hold similar views as me, the researcher, in order to collect genuine variation in experiences and conceptions. I did not engage in any discussions about sexual harassment or its prevention with any of the teachers prior to the interview. In total, 22 teachers responded to the call, of which some were former colleagues, strangers or snowball recommendations who responded to my message. Out of the 22 teachers, 14 teachers went on with the process. The other 8 teachers were either unsure of their relevance to the topic because they, for example, work with early childhood students, or apologized for personal reasons, or have stopped responding without explanations. The two teachers who expressed reluctance due to working with early childhood learners, were assured that the scope of the research is not limited to a particular age group and are more interested in how teachers within schools understand their role, which can change according to their students' age group. The two teachers however, preferred to recommend colleagues who work with older students rather than participate themselves.

The 14 teachers who participated in this research are all currently teaching at private schools, of which 3 participants work in private national schools, and the rest in private international schools. To have only teachers from private schools was unintentional. Amongst the original 22 interested candidates, there were two teachers who work at public schools. The two teachers stopped responding to messages to arrange for the interview and could then not take part. The teachers in this research have different credentials where five hold or are candidates of master's in education, five have a postgraduate certificate in education, one has a graduate diploma in teaching, two have specialized bachelors that are directly relevant to their subject area, and one

teacher who has not declared her teaching credentials but certainly has a bachelor's degree. It was essential for this research to have local Egyptian teachers who teach Egyptian students to have the relevant understanding of the Egyptian society which all of the 14 teachers are.

The 14 teachers include 10 women and 4 men. The female insights are likely to vary from the male insights due to the gendered nature of this research topic. It also seemed natural that women would be more interested to engage with the topic, and because there are generally more women teachers than there are men. Out of the 1 million K-12 Egyptian teachers, 60% are women and 40% are men (Mamdouh, 2020). In close proportion to the teacher population, I thus consider the 4 men teachers to have engaged with the topic on a satisfactory level and provided sufficient male perspective to the research. Regarding the teaching stage and years of experience, the teachers have a varying experience to range from 2 to 21 years of classroom teaching to ensure a level of well-rounded depth and engagement with the topics. A majority of 10 teachers have between 5 to 12 years of teaching experience. Many of the teachers have moved across grades throughout their teaching experience. In regard to the grade levels that they currently teach, 9 of the teachers work with middle and high school students (age 12 to 17), while 5 teachers work in the primary stage (age 6 to 11). The middle and high school teachers teach a variety of subjects to include literature, English, maths, arts, science, and social sciences. The five primary stage teachers included one art teacher and four classroom teachers who deliver all the core subjects which often include language, maths, science, and social studies to one class. Four of the five primary stage teachers work with upper primary students (age 9 to 11) and only one teacher is responsible for a lower primary classroom (age 6 to 7). In Table 1 below, I summarize information about teachers who participated in this research.

Pseudonym Name	**Experience** (years)	**Age Group** (years)	**Gender**	**Teaching Stage**
Menna	2	30 - 29	Woman	Primary
Amira	4	23 - 29	Woman	Middle/High
Eman	5 - 12	30 - 39	Woman	Primary
Enas	5 - 12	30 - 39	Woman	Primary
Engy	5 - 12	30 - 39	Woman	Middle/High

Khadiga	5 - 12	30 - 39	Woman	Primary
Mayar	5 - 12	23 - 29	Woman	Primary
Nour	5 - 12	30 - 39	Woman	Middle/High
Bassem	5 - 12	30 - 39	Man	Middle/High
Bahaa	5 - 12	30 - 39	Man	Middle/High
Selim	5 - 12	30 - 39	Man	Middle/High
Sherif	5 - 12	30 - 39	Man	Middle/High
Gihan	14	30 - 39	Woman	Middle/High
Walaa	21	40-49	Woman	Middle/High

Table 1 - Participants Information

6.3 Interviewing

In phenomenography, interviews are the data collection method used the most (Larsson & Holmstrom, 2007). Phenomenographic interviews aim at extracting perception, awareness and approaches to a phenomenon from the participants through emphasizing questions that seek the 'why and how' aspect of the participants' perceptions (Åkerlind, 2005). Due to the qualitative nature of this research with its main aim being understanding teachers' perceptions, questions akin to *'how do you understand your current role in terms of social change? how did you react when students came to you..'* were more suitable for the interview design than others (Townsend, 2013). These kinds of questions allow me to collect insights (Pratt, 2009 as cited in Townsend, 2013) about the SHP phenomenon. In order to capture the variation of understandings and to categorize them in a structured way, I followed Kilinc and Aydin (2013) and Dall'Alba (1996) recommendations and utilized open ended questions in semi-structured interviews to gather the data. The interviews began with prepared questions (Appendix C) that aim to cover the teachers' awareness of sexual harassment, its prevention and their engagement with it. The open-ended nature of the questions I ask enables the teachers to engage with the topic from within their own interests and existing understanding of the phenomenon. Guided by Given's

insights (2012), I designed the interviews questions to be followed by probe questions such as *Can you please share a story of a response to sexual harassment?* to be followed by *What would you have done differently in retrospect?*. Following Trigwell's recommendation (2006), I prompted the teachers to investigate their conceptions more in depth. I capitalized on their previous responses in order to further understand their conceptions through follow-up questions such as *What do you mean by 'our culture will not accept that'?* or or *Why do you think that sex education will be difficult..?*.

Convinced by Åkerlind's pre-interview recommendation (2005), I had a pilot interview as a trial prior to conducting the rest of the interviews. The pilot interview was conducted with one of the participants who was asked for feedback afterwards. The teacher gave general and positive feedback about the coordination prior to the interview and the experience during the interview itself. Within the next two days, I replayed, transcribed and reflected on the essence of the interview. It was helpful to listen to the parts where the teacher asked me to elaborate on what I meant by a certain question, or sounded skeptical about openly responding to certain questions. For example, asking the teacher about the 'social responsibility of the school' was understood differently from what I originally meant. The teacher in the pilot interview and the few ones to follow responded to this question instrumentally to describe the skills and values that graduates should attain from school. I however, meant to ask about how they think that schools as institutions contribute to (progress or regress) social change. The pilot interview also helped in showing the parts where teachers might second guess their openness, particularly when it comes to sharing insights about their current school, the Ministry of Education or the state. Analysis for the pilot interview did not deem meaningful as phenomenographic analysis gathers its meaning from collective data rather than an individual interview. The pilot interview was however helpful for the researcher to reflect on the facilitation, flow, and potential prompts.

The interviews date and time were arranged through Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp with the teachers who expressed interest. The teachers were sent an informed consent form using Google Forms to read and fill in before the interview. The consent form included information about myself, the researcher, and a clear mention of the research topic and interest. The consent form utilized the template offered by the Faculty of Education at the University of Oulu as reference, especially in the participant rights and voluntary participation parts. The teachers were made aware of their rights to anonymity, ability to withdraw anytime, and to further inquire about the research process before, during or after the interview. The 14 teachers partici-

pants have confirmed their voluntary willingness to participate in the research, while two teachers out of the 14 have not given consent to record the interview. In the beginning of the interviews with these two teachers, I explained the research topic and their rights again, to which one has changed his mind and agreed to the recording, while the other teacher still preferred me to take notes rather than record the interview.

11 out of the 14 interviews took place through a video conference via Zoom.com and 3 in person. Video conference was deemed as the most appropriate medium to meet with the teachers. In December 2020, when the interviews were scheduled, the Covid-19 pandemic was still present in Egypt. Although the schools were open at the time and those teachers had to go to work every day, it was still safer for the teachers and for myself to meet online rather than in a public place to reduce the health risks. Additionally, Cairo is a large and overly populated city, where traffic consumes time and energy. Teachers are also very busy professionals, particularly in December right before the winter break. Meeting via Zoom.com saved some of the teachers' time as they only needed 45 minutes to meet online rather than approximately 3 hours if we were to meet in person. The three in-person interviews included one former colleague who preferred to meet, and two teachers who live or work relatively nearby, and distrust the reliability of their internet connection. All of the interviews in this research, online and in-person, began with welcoming the teacher and reading the brief from the consent form. The teachers were then encouraged to ask questions about the process or their participant rights before I started to record and ask questions. Regardless of a few technical difficulties during the online interviews, I generally preferred them not only for their logistic effectiveness but also because I found bracketing more possible. During the in-person interviews, the participants seemed to expect a conversational kind of interaction where I had to consciously refrain from engaging with my views or allow approving or disapproving gestures while maintaining a friendly feeling. In the Zoom interviews, I personally found it easier to ask a question and then listen attentively and quietly to decide on the following question. This is however my subjective perspective on feeling comfortable with online meetings as the interviewer which can differ from that of the interviewees.

Dortins (2002) describes the interviews as a creative interaction where the researcher and the interviewee form a connection and collaboratively create meaning. The interviewer should not expect prepared or straightforward answers from the participants (Given, 2012). The interview as a creative interaction means that some parts of the participant's perceptions will be constructed during the interview time itself. It is a prompting invitation for the participant to engage

with the topic and verbalize their constructed meaning. Since SHP as the topic was explicitly shared with the teachers, I continued to direct the conversation towards its scope (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). Dortins (2002) reflects on the interview process differentiating between the participants "authority on his/her own ideas" and the researcher's "authority on the matter of what the interview was about and what was relevant" (p.210). In this research, the teachers interviewed would sometimes divert to discuss issues they face with school administrations or parents that are irrelevant to SHP. They would then be redirected by a negotiation of another question on the topic.

Marton (1996 as cited in Dortins, 2002) elaborates on interviews in phenomenography to be a joint production between the researcher and interviewee where both parts contribute to the understandings that emerge. I, however, tried my best ability to refrain from reinforcing any perceptions. I exerted effort in bracketing any previous knowledge about the topic to receive the teacher's understanding without interference. It however remains important to recognize that the language I used, my identity and background as the researcher, and surrounding environment in the interview must have in some way navigated fractions of the teacher's perception or communication of their perception. Additionally, Dortins (2002) highlights that many participants recount their experiences rather than dwell on their perception towards it. In this research, several teachers during the interview found it easier to explain the steps their schools are taking to prevent sexual harassment rather than engage deeply with their own reflections and understanding of their role when it comes to the issue. These participants required further prompting with 'why', 'how', and 'in your opinion,' questions in order to engage more with the topic. Due to the taboo nature of the topic in this research, teachers have possibly avoided engaging in internal or explicit dialogue about it prior to this research. As Dortins (2002) shared, participants sometimes express having never considered something prior to the interview or describe the interview itself as a learning experience. Similarly, the teachers in this research would construct conceptions and meanings in the interview process and made statements such as: *"oh, I never thought about it"* or *"I now feel like I want to research this topic more"* which makes the interviews for some of the participants a learning invitation.

6. 4 Analysis

Phenomenographic research can include different forms of qualitative data, it is however common for researchers to use semi-structured interviews with open questions, which have been

used for this research, that are then analysed for an 'Outcome Space' (Reid, 1997 as cited in Dortins, 2002; Richardson, 1999). While each individual interview holds its own meaning, in phenomenography the analysis of the collective interviews forms a greater meaning (Kvale, 1996; Säljö, 1997 as cited in Dortins, 2002). The collective conceptions of teachers in this research, with its variation and categories form the outcome space. Åkerlind (2005) mentions that researchers who work with large numbers of interviews often start by analysing 5 to 10 interviews at first to test out the analysis process. I, however, have data from 14 interviews, so a preliminary analysis of some interviews was not well fitting to the size of the study.

The analysis stage of this research process occurred over multiple steps (Åkerlind, 2005; Given, 2012). The six steps followed in the analysis stage of this thesis are presented in Figure 3. I consider the interviewing and transcription of the interview data as the first step of the analysis stage as I have become more familiar with the content and main themes. I have then launched into scoping as the second step where I highlighted parts of the interviews to locate the relevant parts from each interview. I then moved on to the third step of coding where I ran two coding rounds utilizing both deductive and inductive strategies. Inductive coding studies the data with an open mind searching for codes that emerge while deductive coding involves searching for predetermined codes that are relevant to the phenomenon (Mihas & Odum Institute, 2019). Inductive coding in phenomenography is recommended by Beaulieu (2017) to capture the variation emerging from the participants' insights with an open mind. Simultaneously, the literature and theoretical concepts explored in chapters 3 and 4 inevitably present key themes around the topic as a form of deductive coding. In this research, examples of inductive codes that emerged from the data are *zero-tolerance policy* and *school resources* while preset deductive codes included *religion, parents,* and *culture*. In the fourth step of the analysis process, these codes from the prior step were arranged as the first-level categories. Next in the fifth step, grouping of first-level categories was conducted to form the second-level categories. In the sixth and final step, the second-level categories were compiled leading to a third level of categories creating an outcome space of teachers' conceptions about SHP. Reed (2006) describes the outcome space as a hierarchical structure that shows the categorization and presents the variation in understanding or experiencing a phenomenon. In this section, I explain these mentioned steps of the analysis stage in order to reach an outcome space which I will next present in the findings section in detail.

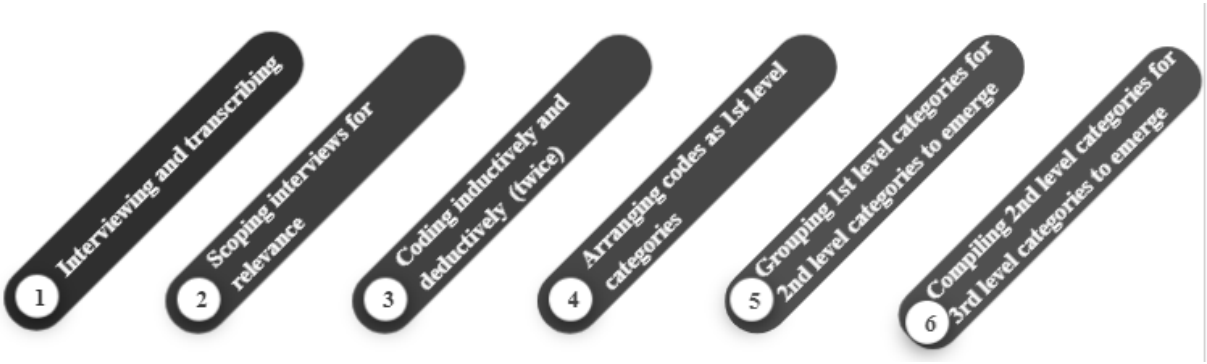


Figure 3 - Analysis Process to reach the Outcome Space

In step 1, having collected formal consent to use the interview as data and record it, 13 interviews of the 14 were recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai, an audio to text recording transcription software. As for the interview to which recording consent was not given, I still used the notes and quotes in the analysis process. The technology made available through Otter.ai allowed me to upload the recordings from my phone or from Zoom.com to be quickly turned into editable text. The text is not instantly ready for analysis since I had to replay each interview two to three times and edit the text simultaneously. Similar to most voice recognition technology, there were certainly flaws with the automated transcription to which I had to carefully replay and correct. Additionally, the teachers spoke mostly in English but still used a varying amount of Arabic amid speaking. I translated the Arabic parts since they were significantly less and also because the analysis leading to the outcome space was planned to be written in English. The teachers were all however informed that they are free to express themselves in Arabic, English or in a combination of both as they would normally do. I expected more Arabic content and prepared myself to translate larger parts of the interviews from Arabic to English, but the majority of the interviews were entirely in English.

To launch the coding process in steps 2 and 3, I installed Nvivo, a qualitative research analysis software which I used to code the interviews. Nvivo helped in organizing and offering different ways to view codes and their associated references. Having the interviews transcribed via Otter.ai and uploaded on Nvivo, excerpts that held meaning within the scope of this research were highlighted while the rest of the text was disregarded (Syennson & Theman, 1983 as cited in Åkerlind, 2005). For example, some of the teachers dwelled on their feelings of frustration caused by the school leadership or parents. They would share incidents and reflections from situations that drifted away from the topic of sexual harassment, and as the researcher, I put aside these parts of the interviews in the analysis for lacking relevance to this research.

Throughout the coding stage, I tried to capture as many categories as the data can provide in order to represent a wide range of variation in conceptions which help construct a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. I read the transcriptions several times with different focus each time to identify codes that will later on be organized into similarities and differences to inform the final categories (Åkerlind, 2005). I made choices based on whether inductive or deductive coding will be utilized. I began the coding stage with preset ideas for the kinds of codes that are predicted to be found and deductively looked for in the data such as *'parental resistance, culture, religion'* - in a more deductive approach. I was also open to new codes that emerge in a singular or plural presence amidst the data such as *'gender unbias, sex education, policy'* - in a more inductive approach. It was interesting to observe how in the first few interviews (2 or 3 interviews) many codes kept appearing and making themselves apparent in the data. It was also becoming a limitation on my ability to realize new codes. The inductive process gradually turned into a deductive one since I was automatically reading the interview in light of the codes established in the interviews prior to it. Some parts of the interviews were double and triple coded. For example, when a participant commented on sexual harassment awareness saying:

"And I think that these are things that we don't really talk about that much in our culture, we don't really discuss these things very much at home. It's more like, don't ever let anyone see you, don't ever let anyone see your naked body, don't ever, it's your fault..." (Nour)

The above quote from an interview has been given two codes: one as *(denial)* and the other *(culture)*.

Although I was satisfied with the codes that emerged from the first round of coding, it was procedurally better to re-code the interviews once more, in a different order the second time. In re-coding the interviews, it helped to move away from the codes that were early on established from the first interviews. The second round of analysis coded the interviews in a different order to avoid the same earlier ones informing insights into the rest. Similar codes have emerged in the second round, but some were given different, more suited names. Also, new codes have emerged in the second round of analysis. After coding each interview, I continued using Nvivo to read each code separately and all the references attached to this code. Reading the references (quotes and paragraphs) falling under each code, has helped in better understanding of each code to prepare for the next stage of categorization and grouping. Upon the completion of coding for all of the 14 interviews, I moved on to the process of categorization resulting in the outcome space which will be presented in the next section.

6.5 The Outcome Space

As suggested by (Beaulieu, 2017) and because it eased my process, the excerpts of text that were given the same code are also considered here as the first-level categorisation of my data. In step 4, the 29 codes from the prior step were arranged as the first-level categories. In step 5, I read each first-level category and tried to group them according to relevance, helping me to form 11 second-level categories. Those second-level categories with their first-level categories laid below them, were put on several mind maps to blend and segment them as appropriate. In step 6, the 11 second-level categories then, according to their overarching theme and area of conception, helped form three third-level categories. The three third-level categories collectively yield an outcome space.

The mapping of the outcome space was done with pencil and paper several times in order to reach a convincing display of the categories. There were codes that have been dismissed altogether or combined into another code. For example, the teachers were asked to elaborate on how they perceive the school's role in social change. Their answers were coded as ‘conceptions on schools' role’. In the categorization process, it became clear that the teachers' conceptions on the schools’ role in society, was not relevant to the scope of the research question that essentially explores the teachers' conceptions on (their) role and views surrounding SHP. The entire code of ‘conceptions on schools’ role’ was disregarded except for few excerpts that were coded under other suitable parts such as ‘school leadership’ when describing the school’s vision that enables or prevents teachers from combating sexual harassment. The categorization process was concluded with the emergence of the outcome space that reflects the variation of teachers’ conceptions on sexual harassment prevention.

The table shown on the following page (Table 2) is utilized to present the outcome space in an organized manner.

1st Level Categories	2nd Level Categories	3rd Level Categories	Outcome Space
Motivation	C1.1 Identity	C1. Teachers Role in SHP	Conceptions of Teachers on SHP
Background			
Trust	C1.2 Relationships with Students		
Support			
Forms of Harassment	C1.3 Awareness		
Culture of Harassment			
Complexity of cases			
Monitoring	C1.4 Classroom Interactions		
Gender un-bias			
Addressing social issues			
Preparation	C1.5 Participation in this Research		
Interest			
Discussions			
Denial	C2.1 Parents	C.2 Environment for SHP	
Aggression			
Resistance			
Culture	C2.2 Society		
Religion			
Resources	C2.3 School Leadership		
Vision			
Response			
Cross-Curricular Integration	C3.1 Teaching	C.3 Ideas for SHP	
Sex Education			
Feminist Pedagogy			
Safe space	C3.2 Policy		
Zero tolerance			
Policy			
Families	C3.3 Community Engagement		
Schools Network			

Table 2. Outcome Space and Categorisation

The outcome space includes three third-level categories of conceptions which are Teachers' Role in SHP, Environment for SHP and Ideas for SHP as shown in Table 2. Each of the third-level categories was informed by a group that was formed out of the second-level categories, and each second-level category was priorly formed by a group of codes (first-level categories). The 3rd level of categories can be perceived as a broad summarized classification of the conceptions that teachers shared in the interviews. In parts of the interviews, teachers shared how they understand SHP and their role in it including aspects of their teaching practice, personality or background that inspire or discourage that role. These aspects had worked their way upward to eventually inform the third-level conception of Teachers Role in SHP (C1). Teachers have also explained how they understand the surrounding environment enabling or challenging them in

their role which informed the second third-level conception Environment for SHP (C2). While the teachers were reflecting on their understanding, sharing their experiences and elaborating on the environment for SHP, they were continuously making suggestions and mentioned ideas as potential for how they think schools and teachers (including themselves) should be preventing sexual harassment. These ideas were grouped together to inform the final third-level conception Ideas for SHP (C3). Having described the empirical process that was followed in order to reach the outcome space, the next chapter will present the findings elaborately through explaining the categories within it in detail.

7. Findings - Explanation of the Outcome Space

The main findings of the phenomenographic research are the categories that reflect the variation in understanding a phenomenon, here being the conceptions of teachers on their role in SHP in Egypt. In the previous section, the collection, transcription, and coding of the data leading to the gradual emergence of the outcome space was explained. The outcome space is further explained in this section with elaboration on the categories that were informed by the coded quotes of the interviews. In line with Marton's explanation of findings (2001 as cited in Kilinc & Aydin, 2013), the categories here are organized and explained to present the teachers' conceptions towards SHP. Additionally, as per Given's explanation (2012), the quotes from interviews in this section are utilized to present a distinct aspect about a category or highlight differences between categories. These excerpts are a formatted version of the original speech where I removed repeated words and thinking fillers. It each ends with the teacher's pseudonym name to ensure their anonymity, to be followed by the first-level category that was coded in the quote and the relevant aspects of meaning that informed the coding of this category. It will follow the format of (pseudonym name, *1st level category* - aspects of meaning / *other first-level category* (as applicable) - aspects of meaning).

7.1 Teachers Role in Sexual Harassment Prevention (C1)

The conception of Teachers' Role in SHP (C1) is a compilation of the insights that teachers have shared on how they perceive their role in social change with particular attention to SHP in schools and society. The third-level category here which is *Conceptions of Teachers Role* (C1) was informed by the variation expressed by teachers on how they view their professional *Identity* (C1.1), value and nurture *Relationships* with their students (C1.2), are personally

Aware of the issue of sexual harassment (C1.3), utilize their *Classroom Interactions* (C1.4) and through the interest developed from participating in this research which contributes to *Change* in their understanding of their role (C1.5). Table 3 below shows the aspects of meaning of each category which inspired their grouping into a 1st level category. The first-level categories have then been grouped according to their relevance, similarities, and differences to create the second-level categories.

Aspects of Meaning	1st Level Categories	2nd Level Categories
Teaching job as academic	Motivation	C1.1 Identity
Teaching for convenience		
Desire for social reform		
Multidisciplinary interest		
Age	Background	
Gender		
Motherhood		
Egyptian		
Arabic speaking		
Students feeling safe to speak up	Trust	C1.2 Relationships with Students
Honest communication		
Keeping promises		
Guidance for action	Support	
Follow-up		
Communicate with school/family		
Verbal	Forms of Harassment	C1.3 Awareness
Physical		
Threatening		
Personal space invasion		
Inappropriate content exposure		
Sexualization		
Shame	Culture of Harassment	
Victim blame		
Assault tolerance		
Gaslighting		
Fear		
Lack of evidence	Complexity of Cases	
Pressure to withdraw		
Under-reporting		
Listening to side conversations	Monitoring	C1.4 Classroom Interactions
Alertness to social gossip		
Responding to observations		
Challenge students' views	Gender Un-bias	
Correct misconceptions		
Engage with students about issues	Addressing social issues	
Facilitate a critical discussion		
Researching prior to interview	Preparation	
Brainstorming with students		

Interest in the complete research	Interest	C1.5 Participation in this Research
Interest in the complete research		
Initiating discussions with peers	Discussions	
Suggesting policies and activities		

Table 3 - Conception of Teachers Role in SHP (C1)

C1.1 Identity

The teachers referred to aspects of their *Motivation* and *Background* which informed this second-level category of *Identity* to combat sexual harassment. Different aspects of meaning such as teaching for convenience, teaching for subject knowledge, desire for social reform and having multidisciplinary interests were interpreted to inform the first-level category *Motivation*. Additionally, aspects of meaning regarding gender, age, nationality and language were interpreted to inform the first-level category *Background*. Both *Motivation* and *Background* were grouped together to create the second-level category *Identity* as one of the categories that contribute to how the teachers understand their role in SHP.

In the beginning of each interview, the teachers were asked about their initial *Motivation* to work as teachers and how they view their part in social reform. There are teachers who expressed interest in joining the teaching profession for having knowledge and passion for a particular subject, for example physics or maths. Other teachers reflect on the decision to pursue teaching as a career for convenience reasons. There are, however, teachers who connected their interest in teaching to their desire for social reform and making positive change. The excerpt below is from an interview with a teacher who has a multidisciplinary interest in education and social issues. This teacher maintains a critical tone towards sexism and social issues throughout the remainder of the interview. She is one of the teachers whose practice involves elements of feminist pedagogy and consciously combats sexism through the curriculum.

"Well, I knew that I wanted to do something that will help change lives. I'm an artist, and I'm a person who's interested in politics a lot, and like social justice and all these things. Like, I don't know how you can be a politician and an artist and a speaker and a writer at the same time other than through being a teacher and I love talking to young adults. So that's why…" (Nour, *Motivation* - Desire for social reform & Multidisciplinary interest)

On the other hand, the following excerpt shows an example of teachers whose motivation in the profession was subject-oriented.

"I think these are the two reasons; the lack of very good teachers in physics, and because I know the topic very well." (Selim, *Motivation* - Teaching job as academic)

It is important to note that the teachers with teaching motives other than social change, were actively responding to the interview questions and open to engage with the topic. They were however, clearly less aware of their role and potential in combating sexual harassment through their teaching and conceptualizing their perceptions towards the topic during the interview itself.

Few teachers shared insights on how their *Background* influences their self-perception in having a role for SHP. For example, one of the teachers has continuously referred to being a mother throughout the interview and engaged with the topic largely from a maternal intuition. The teacher frequently referenced her experience with her children and conversations she initiated with them on sexual harassment awareness. Another teacher shared feelings of skepticism on his default eligibility to work with male students solely because he is a male figure without much regard to his credentials to address the topic. Below is an excerpt from the interview with the mentioned male teacher.

"I was asked to give a speech to boys about puberty because they were having this awareness campaign, and they were talking to the girls, and they thought I should give the talk about puberty, just because I am a male. And then I was extremely anxious about it. And at the end, I asked not to do it, because I'm not well informed. [...]. well, obviously, I know something about it - but I'm not well educated, so I wasn't comfortable doing it." (Sherif, *Background* - Gender)

The teachers' self-perceptions on the eligibility of their *Background* to teach for SHP was shared by different teachers and impacted their confidence and comfort level in their willingness to address the topics.

C1.2 Relationships with Students

The teachers' conceptions on their role in SHP brought up elements of *Trus*t and *Support,* which are the first-level categories that informed this second-level category of relationships with the students. Teachers who understand their role in the combat of sexual harassment whether inside schools or to extend beyond schooling and contribute to social change, are also aware of the fact that *Trust* and *Support* are enablers for the success of their SHP efforts. The teachers who shared experiences with SHP or intervention have referred to their students' *Trust* in them. The aspects of meaning that informed the first-level category of *Trust* involve the students feeling

safe to speak up, having honest communication, and the teachers keeping promises. As for the aspects of meaning which have informed the first-level category of *Support*, they involved the teacher providing guidance for action, following up, and communicating with the management and the family. *Trust* and *Support* have thus been grouped to create this second-level category of *Relationships with Students* as a component of how the teachers in this research understand their role in SHP.

The students would speak up about a topic or issue to the teacher they feel they have a friendly relationship with, and has a habit of responding to their concerns or interests of social topics. A teacher shared how building *Trust* is important for her work with the students. This was an introduction to how a student trusted and shared with her an experience of sexual harassment where the teacher took matters forward, guided the student in reporting and taking action and facilitated communication between the student and the parent. Explanations to why this student chose this particular teacher to help her out of other subject teachers, can be explained by the kind of relationship that this teacher shares with her students. Below is an excerpt where she recounts how she invites them to *Trust* her and how she encourages them to speak up.

"But this is what I try to do as an educator, that I always try to get close to the students [...] If you feel that you trust me, if something happens, because it happens, so you can always come to me and speak up, tell me whatever you want." (Gihan, *Trust* - Students feeling safe)

Another teacher quoted below conceptualizes a component of his work as a *Support* figure in order to develop the students' characters and provide guidance while they learn about the world as adolescents.

"Part of my job is to enhance and nurture their characters and to be there as a support figure" (Bassem, *Support* - Guidance for action)

Teachers who understand their role in combating sexual harassment inside schools or to extend beyond schooling and contribute to social change, are also aware of the fact that *Trust* and *Support* are enablers for the success of their SHP efforts.

C1.3 Awareness

As part of warming up into the interview, teachers were asked to share their understanding of sexual harassment. The teachers shared insights that held different aspects of meaning such as verbal, physical, threats, personal space, content exposure and sexualization forms which helped identify the first-level category *Forms of Harassment.* The teachers have also delved

into cultural aspects of meaning such as shame, victim blame, assault tolerance, gaslighting and fear which all described a *Culture of Harassment* as a first-level category. Part of being aware of the issue of sexual harassment was showing understanding of the *Complexity of the Cases*, which became a first-level category with aspects of meaning such as lack of evidence, the pressure to withdraw cases, and the under-reporting of incidents.

While all teachers defined sexual harassment using similar words such as physical, verbal, inappropriate, some teachers were more eloquent than others on their understanding of sexual harassment today to also include threatening, cyber harassment which occurs online, invasion of personal space that creates discomfort, sexualization of women and girls, and exposure to inappropriate content. The word 'inappropriate', which was frequently present across the data, is used to refer to age, setting or relationship suitability. Teachers during the interview shared some insights that reflect the depth of their understanding of sexual harassment, the culture that reproduces it and thus had a more rounded view on their part in preventing and ending it. A teacher gave special attention to the issue of evidence in accusations of sexual harassment, inside or outside of schools. This teacher mentioned the need for evidence in sexual harassment cases and was skeptical of the quick escalation of claims without thorough investigation as it can cause false claims to harm innocent people along the way.

"It is a serious issue where things tend to escalate quickly so the response to it is wrong. The challenging thing about this issue is that you must have a photographic or video evidence, but the issue is that some gossip or rumors of few words [...] can cause someone to be falsely accused." (Bahaa, *Complexity of Cases* - Lack of evidence)

Lack of evidence and the extent to which the public – or school leaders and parents - should automatically believe victims is a common theme in discussions on sexual harassment in Egypt, especially with men who often argue against the risk of false accusations that this approach leaves innocent men at.

C1.4 Classroom Interactions

The teachers explained their current role in SHP through practices that they already engage in. This does not include all teachers, for some teachers were engaging with the topic for the first time during the interview. As for teachers who directly actualized their role, or conceptualized it through reflections prompted by the interview, classroom interactions were the core setting for SHP efforts. The classroom interactions as described by the teachers involved them listening

to conversations, being alert to social gossip amongst students, and responding to observations of students' conversations or behaviors. These aspects of meaning were coded as the first-level category of *Monitoring*. Classroom interactions also involved aspects of meaning such as challenging students' views on gender, and correcting misconceptions. This kind of classroom interaction was coded as a first-level category *Gender Un-bias.* Similarly, another first-level category that emerged from coding aspects of meaning such as engaging with social issues in lessons and facilitating critical discussions was *Addressing Social Issues*. The three first-level categories of *Monitoring, Gender Un-bias* and *Addressing Social Issues* were grouped to create the second-level category of Classroom Interactions. While sharing their understanding of their role in combating sexual harassment, quoted below is one teacher referring to her classroom interaction as a high school teacher where challenging *Gender-bias* and *Addressing Social Issues* was prevalent.

"I can facilitate the discussion and try to challenge their ideas on victim blaming or shaming the victim or blackmail and social media activism and so on. So I can like unpack notions of sexism [...] or ideas that I would judge as problematic if I hear the students express them and then we can start a conversation and I can try to change their minds about things [...] I try to keep an eye out on anything that might seem like harassment..." (Amira, *Monitoring* - listening to conversations/ *Gender un-bias* - challenging views on gender & correcting misconceptions/ *Addressing Social Issues* - facilitating critical discussion)

Different kinds and examples of classroom interactions were recounted while teachers reflected on how they understand their role in combating sexual harassment. *Monitoring* was referred to by some teachers to include keeping an open eye and ear to how the students are behaving, and the issues discussed amongst them. This requires intentionality that can only be present in teachers who have sufficient awareness of sexual harassment as an issue as discussed in the previous conception 'awareness'. Some teachers shared an understanding of their role to utilize *Gender biased* opinions of students as opportunities for learning and challenging problematic mindsets. It is also a learning invitation to correct misconceptions and broaden horizons on issues of sexism, patriarchy, and harassment.

C1. 5 Participation in this Research

Part of conceptualizing their role as teachers in combating sexual harassment was being formed through their Participation in this Research and during the interview process itself. The teachers shared insights that involved them researching about sexual harassment and brainstorming with

their students which informed a first-level category of *Preparation*. The teachers who expressed interest in further developing their knowledge on the topic or reading the research upon completion had those aspects of meaning coded as the first-level category *Interest*. The teachers who also initiated discussions with colleagues, or suggested policies and learning activities for SHP between the time of announcing the research to the interview appointment had those insights coded as first-level category *Discussions*. The first-level categories of *Preparation, Interest* and *Discussions* have collectively informed the second-level category Participation in this Research.

It was possible to recognize the teachers who have not thought or reflected on this aspect of their work prior to the interview. Those teachers expressed sentiments on the novelty of the topic for them, or hesitance to whether their insights will be helpful for the research, and some shared their attempt to *Prepare* for the interview through a simple Google search or initiating conversation with their colleagues. One of the teachers started a *Discussion* on sexual harassment with high school students and shared what they discussed as quoted here:

"I asked my kids by the way before this interview, like what do you guys think about what's going on, and they told me their horror stories." (Nour, *Preparation* - brainstorming with students)

Many of the teachers expressed *Interest* in reading the final work of this research, and one teacher shared that she needs further education saying *"I feel like I am lacking a lot about this topic. I have to educate myself on it."* (Menna, *Interest* - Developing own knowledge)

The teachers were shaping parts of their conceptions on their role through responding to the questions. It is likely that teachers who have not considered their role prior to participation in this research are now aware of the space for active engagement with the issue. This sentiment of interest in the topic by the teachers concludes their conceptions of their role in SHP. The teachers have simultaneously brought up cultural and social aspects that can directly or indirectly shape the extent of their role. In the next section, I present the categorization of these environmental aspects that influence teachers' role in SHP.

7.2 Environment for Sexual Harassment Prevention C2

The second third-level category groups the teachers' conceptions on the Environment for SHP (C2). This category entails all the understandings shared by teachers on the cultural aspects

affecting SHP efforts in schools. The teachers' insights discussed Parents (C2.1) responses and emotions from previous experiences and impressions. Teachers frequently brought up culture and religion as critical features of the Egyptian Society (C2.2) that must be factored in their efforts for prevention and any intervention. Another category that informed this conception is School Leadership (C2.3) where teachers discussed school management alignment and vision for change, factors that drive schools' responses, and priorities in resource allocation. Table 4 below presents the aspects of meaning that were captured from the interviews to form the first level of categories, and the frequency of their referencing in the data.

Aspects of Meaning	1st Level Categories	2nd Level Categories
Refusal that their child is a victim	Denial	C2.1 Parents
Refusal that their child harassed		
Not informing their child of possible dangers and their support		
Blaming the school and teachers	Aggression	
Responding in defensiveness		
Threatening attitude		
Reluctance to engage with school team	Resistance	
Object to efforts of SHP in classroom		
Criticize teachers and leadership		
Taboo and stigma	Culture	C2.2 Society
Sensitive issues avoidance		
Controversial conversations		
Gossip and fast spread of rumors		
Unequal attention to false accusations		
Reluctance to discuss sexual issues	Religion	
Objection to sex education		
Conservatism		
Time balance between academic subjects and social emotional learning	Resources	C2.3 School Leadership
Costs of hiring or consulting specialists		
Costs of holding special events		
Staff workload		
Alignment with teachers for SHP	Vision	
Interest in social change		
Real-life relevance for students		
Fast escalation	Response	
Rushed decisions		
Fear of negative word of mouth		
Defensiveness		
Priority to protect reputation		
Dialogue with students and families		

Table 4 – Conception of Environment for SHP (C2)

C2.1 Parents

Each of the teachers interviewed mentioned parents once or several times. The teachers shared insights and experiences with parents *Denial* which as a first-level category was informed by refusal that their child is a sexual harassment victim, or possibly a harasser, and having not educated their child about possible dangers or their support in case an incident occurs. Another first-level category that informed this category of Parents is *Aggression*. The aspects of meaning that were coded to create the first-level category of *Aggression* involved parents blaming the school and teachers in harassment investigations, responding in defensiveness, and showing a threatening attitude. *Resistance* is also a first-level category that contributes to Parents. *Resistance* was created as a first-level category after coding aspects of meaning such as parents' reluctance to engage with the school team for SHP, objecting to the SHP efforts and criticizing teachers and school leadership. All three first-level categories of *Denial, Aggression* and *Resistance* have been grouped together to create this second-level category of Parents.

The general conception around parents when it comes to the combat or prevention of sexual harassment has negative undertones. Teachers have described parents as the main challenge in actualizing their role in SHP or other educational efforts of sex education. The teachers gave examples of how parents often respond to incidents that involve their children (either as victim or harasser) in *Denial* or *Aggression*. They challenge the teachers and school management back with these accusations and undermine the teacher's ability to judge or respond to the situation. In the following excerpt, a teacher shared an insight on common experiences with parents' denial as below:

"There's the challenge of parents who just don't want to hear what you have to say. So if you raise a red flag [...] Some of them will just completely dismiss it." (Eman, *Denial* - Refusal that their child is a victim)

The following is an excerpt from a teacher who is initiating SHP activities at her school, and shared this insight about parents *Resistance.*

"The parents, yeah, I wouldn't think twice. We had the argument on having Sex-Ed at school [...] And what I understood is that the biggest thing stopping us are the parents. Because many parents would consider this as exposure that they don't want their kids to be exposed to." (Khadiga, *Resistance* - Object to efforts of SHP in classroom)

Parents of children (young or older) who are uninvolved in incidents of sexual harassment also show *Resistance* or close monitoring to the efforts of teacher in SHP. Some parents share their skepticism about exposing the students to issues or ideas beyond their age and would rather avoid discussions of any sexual nature in the classroom perceiving it to be their responsibility at home where they can talk to their children or teenagers in the way they deem appropriate and sufficient.

C2.2 Society

Issues of sexual harassment, equality for women and safety in the Egyptian context is increasingly discussed on public platforms yet remains widely controversial. Normally, teachers have mentioned *Society* in their interviews while navigating their role in SHP. The aspects of meaning that discussed the sensitivity, avoidance, taboo and stigmatization; the controversial conversations; the spread of gossip and rumors; the unequal attention to cases with false accusations were all coded as *Culture* as a first-level category. The insights shared by teachers that brought up reluctance to discuss sexual issues, objection to sex education or conservatism in any religious light were coded as *Religion* as another first-level category. Both *Culture* and *Religion* have thus been grouped to create the second-level category Society, which was later grouped to show the Conceptions on Environment for SHP (C2). References to society included mentions of *Culture* and *Religion*, but also often as a collective condition of society. The Egyptian culture according to the teachers, is resistant to adequate engagement with the topic of sexual harassment and would predictably be resistant to the teachers' ideas on SHP. This teacher explains how she perceives culture to be a reason enabling sexual harassment and an obstacle to positive dialogue.

"We're so bound by what culture has set for us that we get too scared to discuss other maybe sensitive topics [...]. Culture is a huge barrier when it comes to the taboo of avoiding such topics, rather than tackling it and, you know, opening the floor for discussion.[...]. Because again, most of us, up until our generation, we were not brought up for this to be part of our education. And it's sort of like the elephant in the room. We know it's there. It's something that it's important, but it's never actually tackled directly or in an open sense." (Engy, *Culture* - Taboo and stigmatization & Sensitive issues avoidance)

With regard to religion and its association to conservatism as a desirable value, the teacher in the quotes below commented on how it functions as an excuse to silence controversial conversations.

"Here we always mix such sex-ed with religion, why? [...] although they are totally different. There are people who are not very religious but are very aware and know what things should be. While others can be very strict and religious but are lost with no knowledge because everything is wrong and 'haraam' (sinful). This is degrading to my IQ and mental capabilities." (Gihan, *Religion* - Reluctance to discuss sensitive issues & Objection to Sex-Ed)

Culture and *Religion* as threads of the fabric of Egyptian society, were repeatedly referred to as challenges faced by teachers and schools in change making. Both aspects are closely intertwined resulting in what is often described in Egypt as a 'conservative society' where the separation between religious beliefs and social norms are blurred.

C2.3 School Leadership

The final second-level category that informed the Environment for SHP conception (C2) is School Leadership. School leadership as a category emerged from the grouping of first-level categories *Resources, Vision* and *Response*. *Resources* as a first-level category was informed by aspects of meaning on time balance between academic and social emotional learning, the costs of hiring specialists or having special events, and the challenge with staff workload. The first-level category *Vision* was informed by aspects of meaning that discussed the school's alignment with the teachers, their interest in social change and interest in making real-life relevance to the students' education. The last first-level category for School Leadership is *Response* which coded the aspects of meaning that discussed escalation, rushed decision, school management defensiveness, fear of negative word of mouth, having a priority to protect their reputation and the kind of dialogue they have with students and families. School Leadership combines the insights shared by the teachers on factors beyond their individual capacity for efforts of SHP to be actualized and supported.

Teachers mentioned that school leaders have scarce resources to work with in terms of time and money. Some of the ideas of SHP that teachers have in order to act on their role, takes away from the time allocated to subject curriculum delivery. The time for sessions and discussions with the students for prevention, in addition to investigation and support in case of intervention should be allocated and approved by the school leadership or else teachers will feel pressure to focus on the lessons as prescribed by the curriculum. Another resource which teachers predict that schools would not afford is money. Some of the teachers perceived SHP to cost the school money in order to train the teachers, hold sessions by specialists for students and parents, and

possibly hire a specialist to work with the students on adopting the correct mindsets or providing counseling as appropriate.

"I don't know whether it's financially because they don't want to pay another person on board. [….] Unfortunately, we lack consistency. You'll have a one-time workshop for students, teachers and parents, then we have unfortunately, some heads (managers), they believe that this is enough" (Gihan, *Resources* - Cost of hiring specialists & Cost of special events)

School leadership was also understood as something which impacts the teacher's efforts if the school's *Vision* is unaligned with how the teacher perceives their role in SHP. One of the teachers is quoted on the alignment aspect here:

"If I decided to do it individually, the challenge is that I have to take the consent of the management first." (Menna, *Vision* - Alignment with teachers)

Showing a different perspective, a teacher has reflected, as quoted below, on how the school's *Vision* and willingness to address social issues helps the teachers feel supported in the work they do for social change through character building.

"We have character building lessons so if we bring an expert who can discuss those things with them [students], I think that they [parents] can accept it because again we are a well-established school [...] Our slogan is 'we teach for life'." (Walaa, *Vision* - Interest in social change & Real-life relevance for students)

In terms of the *Response* category of school leadership, there is an emphasis on the conflict of interest and moral incompetence that schools show when facing a case of sexual harassment. The school leaders are perceived by the teachers to look after the reputation of the school and prioritize its image as a safe environment and a well-disciplined one. This motive drives school leaders, according to some of the teachers' insights to deny the victims their right of a thorough and prompt investigation. Another manifestation of this urgency to protect itself from negative word of mouth has the school management arrive at conclusions and make decisions that are perceived by some teachers as rushed and possibly unfair in case of false accusations. One of the teachers has shared his concerns on how school leaders *Respond* to cases of sexual harassment or attacks from parents for teaching against sexual harassment, as quoted below:

"The school's usual response is denying. [...] the school's reaction is directed towards protecting its reputation and not solving the issue. [...] Another issue is that the school who gets a case

becomes labelled. So it makes the school instead of solving a case, it is defending its image." (Bahaa, *Response* - Defensiveness/Fear of negative word of mouth/Priority to protect reputation)

This section combined the environmental aspects that impact the teachers' actualization of their capacity to combat sexual harassment. Moving on from the barriers, I present in the next section the teachers' ideas and imaginaries of their (and the schools') role in SHP.

7.3 Ideas for Sexual Harassment Prevention C3

During the interviews, the teachers were asked about how they think SHP can occur in schools and what their role in the future can be. This resulted in several ideas and suggestions discussing the potential that exists for SHP efforts in schools as shown in Table 5 below. The teachers' insights were coded for first-level categories that next informed second-level categories of Teaching, School Culture and Community Engagement making the third conception of Ideas for SHP (C3). Additionally, while teachers were sharing responses to other questions, they kept a future-oriented approach towards what teachers, parents and school leadership should be doing. Through further prompts during the interviews on ideas such as sex education, policies, and parental resistance, the teachers were able to provide insights onto imaginaries and approaches to navigate or actualize these ideas.

Aspects of Meaning	1st Level Categories	2nd Level Categories
Teach safety for young learners	Cross-Curricular Integration	C3.1 Teaching
Raise awareness for young learners		
Recognize existing exposure of adolescents to the issue of harassment		
Engage in dialogue with adolescents on sexual harassment		
Teach content of cyber safety, body autonomy and consent to adolescents		
Active involvement of adolescents in SHP		
Subject relatedness		
Attitude of confusion and skepticism	Sex Education	
Complete rejection		
Attitude of full support		
Specialized facilitation		
Single sex program		
Relationship dynamics		
Homeschool delivery		
Context-sensitive curriculum		
Address sexism in school policies		

Monitor sexism in classroom interaction	Feminist Pedagogy	
Challenge gender-bias of students		
Feminist interpretation of the curriculum		
Selection of work by/about women		
Speak-up culture encouragement	Safe Space	C3.2 School Culture
Safe channels of reporting and witnessing		
Availability of counsel and support		
Whole-school approach in all classrooms/teachers		
Connection to 'outside' world		
Strict measures of SHP	Zero Tolerance	
Strong consequences for sexual harassment		
Explicit communication and displays of culture		
Clear reporting system	Policy	
Confidential measures in investigation		
Transparent procedures of intervention and action		
Inclusive of students and teachers		
Education through awareness sessions	Families	C3.3 Community Engagement
Involvement in SHP efforts		
Bridge the future impact of SHP education		
Navigate resistance through whole-school approach		
Combat sexism through the curriculum		
Collaborative efforts	Schools Network	
Common goals		
Align efforts		
Exchange feedback and learning		

Table 5 – Conception of Ideas for SHP (C3)

C3.1 Teaching

In this part, interpretation of the ideas shared by teachers on SHP through their teaching will be presented. The teachers shared ideas that held meaning about integrating topics of cyber safety, body autonomy and consent in their teaching. Sexual harassment awareness, engaging in dialogue with adolescents, recognizing existing exposure to the issue of sexual harassment and active involvement of adolescents in the topic were also suggested by the teachers. These aspects of meaning were coded as first-level category *Cross-curricular Integration* where teaching for SHP will occur through existing curricula and academic subjects to extend their social emotional learning and character development. The teachers were prompted to share their ideas about teaching sex education. The aspects of meaning that expressed their attitude towards sex

education involved confusion, skepticism, full support and complete rejection and were coded to inform first-level category Sex Education. Other aspects of meaning that involved imaginative ideas about Sex Education involved having a single sex program, a context-sensitive curriculum and a suggestion of homeschooling delivery of sex education. These aspects of meaning were also coded as first-level category Sex Education. Some of the teachers also shared aspects of meaning that fits into the scope of *Feminist Pedagogy* where teaching is proactively adopting a feminist approach. The aspects of meaning included addressing sexism in the school policy, monitoring of sexism in classroom interaction, challenge gender bias of students, teaching a feminist interpretation of the curriculum and integrating work by and about women. These aspects of meaning were coded to inform first-level category *Feminist Pedagogy*. *Cross-Curricular Integration, Sex Education* and *Feminist Pedagogy* were grouped and informed second-level category Teaching.

During the interviews, the teachers were simultaneously blending conceptions on their role, their potential, challenges, and ideas that can be implemented in classrooms for SHP. In a few of the interviews, teachers listened to the question and further inquired on whether I was interested in what they are doing, or what they *can be doing*. Other times, a teacher phrased it along the lines of – should I say what is happening, or what I think should be happening?. Throughout the interviews, many of the teachers moved organically between sharing their experiences and role to criticizing aspects of it, implying or making explicit comments on the better way to approach the topic. Additionally, the interviews included a few questions that were directly prompting ideas and hypothetical practices on SHP to further help the teachers conceptualize their potential role in it. For example, the teachers were asked the following questions:

- *How do you perceive the teacher's role in early childhood versus adolescent education regarding sexual harassment prevention?*
- *How do you perceive the potential for sex education – as a subject - in combating sexual harassment?*

Some of the teachers were more able to find the connection between their subjects and SHP whether from a practical safety guidance approach, addressing cultural aspects of sexual harassment as a phenomenon, enhancing critical skills through debate, or facilitating dialogue through artwork and literature.

In the following quotes, different teachers share how they perceive the potential for their subjects (art, literature, and class teacher, respectively) or time with the students to integrate efforts of SHP and changing mindsets:

"For me, or for someone who teaches math, I don't know what they can be doing. Specifically, maybe in English, or social studies, maybe there is more room to tackle different social issues in general or like social topics. But other subjects like do not have a lot of room, or a lot of opportunity to relate it to that." (Enas, *Cross-curricular Integration* - Subject relatedness)

"And actually, other topics came up when I was delivering a book in English, it's called the Woman Warrior. It's mainly based on Chinese culture and it brings up lots of different controversial topics on gender as well. So this opened the floor for me to link things together and to talk about it on a different cultural premises and kind of open floor for discussion" (Engy, *Cross-curricular Integration* - Subject relatedness / *Feminist Pedagogy* - Feminist interpretation of the curriculum & Selection of work by and about women)

"We just had a session about that with the fourth graders. And we've been having a lot of discussion about you know, about what sexual harassment is, how to keep your body safe, your rights, like giving them hypothetical scenarios and asking them how they would deal with it. It's a thing actually that we're trying to work on." (Eman, *Cross-curricular Integration* - Teach safety for young learners & Raise awareness for young learners)

The quotes presented above make some interesting points about how teachers perceive the potential for their subjects to address sexual harassment that is also age appropriate. For example, the art teacher (Enas) shows confusion on how sexual harassment can be integrated into her primary stage art lessons. This research involves another art teacher at high school who perceives her subject to be a convenient opportunity to address social issues particularly sexism and gender-based violence. The variation in this conception on their potential can be explained by their individual differences from (C1) such as their personal engagement with the topic and familiarity with aspects of sexual harassment culture. It can also be explained by the difference of the age group of their students where the art curriculum of primary stage differs from that of high school stage. In the 2nd and 3rd quotes, the high school English teacher (Engy) tries to use culture as an entry point to start a bigger conversation on gender. The fourth-grade class teacher (Eman) approaches the topic in a practical guidance approach through her more holistic job description as class teacher which allows for time and curricular integration.

Another category that emerged from the teachers' insights was their attitudes when asked about sex education. There was clear variation in the attitude teachers shared in response to sex education as a potential channel to teach for SHP. The teachers' attitudes ranged from complete rejection, feelings of confusion, to full support. The teachers who were confused about their standpoint on it, along with the teachers who fully supported sex education, engaged in conceptualizing imaginaries for how a context-sensitive curriculum and delivery can occur. Ideas for the curriculum refused the export of a program from the western countries where students engaging in sexual relationships are taken for granted and socially acceptable. Instead, the teachers imagined a curriculum that is designed with the conservative values and religious beliefs of much of the Egyptian society in mind. The teachers also imagined the delivery of the sex education curriculum to be likely single sex or split according to gender. One of the teachers suggested a curriculum that is provided and regulated by the school, but delivered by the parents at home. The following three quotes show three different attitudes (support, confusion, rejection) towards sex-education which were discussed in light of how this education can change mindsets, empower women and help reduce and prevent sexual harassment cases.

"I think that there should be a point at which they separate the boys from the girls and they talk to them [...] It's like what is a healthy relationship? What are things that can and cannot be tolerated? [...] So, there should be something that prepares these kids for these aspects of life. Hopefully, if we break that cycle, and we start now to educate these kids that are currently in schools on the normalcy of being a biological human, then, hopefully later on, they will have these open conversations with their kids. And this will be something that won't happen anymore." (Nour, *Sex Education* - Single sex program & Relationship dynamics & Attitude of full support)

"Well the main challenge is, you know, the reaction of a somewhat conservative community. [...] And because you're not talking about it in terms of biology, you're talking about it in terms of protection, and things like that. [...] But sex education, that takes you to a place where you're saying it's okay to do that. And then I think that's where the resistance would mostly come from. I don't know actually... I'm personally confused about it. In a sense, it's better to talk about something than to keep it hush hush, and then have all sorts of wrong perceptions come up and things happen that might be really dangerous for adolescents. At the same time, I still believe in some of the conservative values. So it is a confusing idea for me, but I don't know." (Eman, *Sex Education* - Attitude of confusion)

"No. We live in a society that's not accepting of such approach. [...] They're not gonna understand. No. Look, we haven't reached this cultural awareness, where it's okay to talk about sensitive topics. [...] So if you ask me the question, are we ready for sexual education in Egyptian schools? I'd say definitely not. Because our defense mechanism towards sexual education is religion. Are you ready to fight that war?" (Bassem, *Sex Education* - Complete rejection)

Other teachers who expressed openness or partial support to the idea of sex education have engaged with a contextual imaginary for this subject. Below is an example of a teachers who emphasized cultural sensitivity in implementing sex education:

"I think that a sex education curriculum has to be adapted to our society and cannot be like the west. It is relevant to sexual harassment in directly addressing the topic through lessons and teaches about safe relationship dynamics and boundaries." (Mayar, *Sex Education* - Relationship dynamics & Context-sensitive curriculum)

Some of the teachers interviewed narrated interactions with their students that are aligned with a feminist pedagogy approach to teaching, although none have used the term 'feminism'. Below are two examples of teachers experiences with feminist conversations that have taken place in class:

"Well, first, we have to combat sexism, or it's easier to combat sexism before we can combat sexual harassment so outrightly. So as an arts and philosophy teacher and as an English teacher, I have made it a point to make sure that I include text and media and things to study and things to look at that are from a female perspective [...] like it's normalizing the idea that female authors, artists, thinkers, workers exist. And then from there, you can start to discuss, like, why they're saying specific things, and maybe they've had some experiences or whatever." (Nour, *Feminist Pedagogy* - Address sexism & Feminist interpretation of the curriculum & Selection of work by and about women)

"I think the maximum I came close to this with the students was actually talking about equality like the gender gap and specifically in STEM, that's as close as we got. Because there's this idea that girls cannot get into science majors, and the students bring these ideas to the class from home and we talk about this.." (Selim, *Feminist Pedagogy* - Challenge gender bias of students)

The teachers' insights show how addressing sexism and challenging gender bias in the classroom can contribute to the work on combating sexual harassment since is it essentially a manifestation of gender-based violence and sexism. Similar discussions can be further developed as a way to address grassroots of sexual harassment and gender inequality.

C3.2 School Culture

This category of School Culture (C3.2) involves the insights shared on ideas for SHP that relate to the entire school with their classroom teaching as one oar of the boat. The teachers suggested ideas about schools encouraging victims to speak up and creating channels for reporting and for witnesses to come forward with available counseling and support. These aspects of meaning among others such as adopting a whole-school approach to SHP and maintaining connection to the 'outside' world were all coded as first-level category *Safe Space*. Some ideas shared by the teachers also mentioned the school showing *Zero Tolerance* for sexual harassment through a culture that has strict measures and strong consequences that are display and explicitly communicated. These descriptions of the school culture informed the first-level category *Zero Tolerance*. The teachers have additionally referred to a clear reporting system as part of the school *Policy*, where these policies also emphasize confidentiality in investigation, show transparent procedures of intervention and action and are inclusive to the entire school community. These ideas were coded to a first-level category *Policy*. The first-level categories of *Safe Space, Zero Tolerance* and *Policy* were then grouped together to inform the second-level category School Culture.

During the interviews, the teachers were asked *"What do you perceive as potential practice for schools in combating sexual harassment?*". Teachers perceive a whole-school approach to create a more supportive culture for teachers who want to combat sexual harassment. The data also shows that a school culture that is explicit in its zero tolerance of sexual harassment can help educate the students about the severity of the issue and set clear expectations in terms of harassment intolerance at school premises. Another aspect that formalizes the desirable school culture is the presence of clear policies. In the excerpt below, the teacher explains her ideas for a school culture that is safe and firm with its policies when it comes to sexual harassment.

"Maybe it's about raising a culture of, how do I put this? the idea that the school culture does not allow for that. It should be very obvious that the school does not tolerate any kind of sexual harassment whether for teachers, children or whatever. This comes through different ways.

There are policies for that, policies that should be there but not only there for the sake of documenting but for the sake of implementing them really. There should also be a safe space for reporting this. [...]. Small things that add up to the culture of 'we trust you and we love you but there are things that we do not tolerate." (Khadiga, *Safe Space* - Safe channels of reporting/Whole-school approach / *Zero Tolerance* - Explicit communication and displays of culture / *Policy* - Clear reporting system/ inclusive of students and teachers)

In the following quote, a high school teacher shares his ideas on how the school culture should make connections to the students' experiences and exposure beyond school borders. According to this teacher, the school should cope with current events and use them for learning.

"They [schools] need to be very aware of what's going on. [...]. So more specifically, currently in Egypt, there is this sexual harassment move going on and the children are exposed to this at home. They all have Instagram accounts. [...]. When they go to school, and it is completely ignoring or turning a blind eye on it, then something is wrong. [….] It needs to either directly or indirectly tell the children that we as a school know what's going on and we are hopefully abiding or standing with whoever is the right choice." (Sherif, *Safe Space* - Connection to outside world / *Zero Tolerance* - Explicit communication and display of culture)

Transparent procedures and measures in policy documents allow all stakeholders of the school to recognize where the school stands on the issue and can encourage the teachers in approaching the topic without fearing the parents and school leaders' reaction which they shared in Conception 2 (Environment for SHP – C2). Additionally, as it was brought up in the interviews that educating on sexual harassment or having a policy in place will not sufficiently help unless the school environment feels safe, caring, supportive and encourages reporting.

C3.3 Community Engagement

The interviews have also provided ideas for SHP through efforts of community engagement. Ideas for community engagement were directed towards building alliance with the *Families* and creating *Schools Network*. The first-level category of *Families* was informed from coding aspects of meaning that suggested educating families through awareness sessions, involving them in SHP efforts, to explain the future impact of SHP in education, to adopt a whole-school approach and to combat sexism through the curriculum. The other first-level category *Schools Network* was informed by coding ideas that suggested collaboration and alignment of efforts

amongst schools for common goals and exchange of feedback. Both first-level categories *Families* and *Schools Network* were grouped together to create the second-level category Community Engagement. Schools have an opportunity to address social issues through creating strong networks for alignment. One teacher, who has an administrative role, shares insights on how schools, in fear of negative reputation, are reluctant to formalize responses into policy, but are empowered when other schools have a similar practice.

"Usually people be like, 'so you're talking about sexual harassment? Do you have cases of harassment?'. [...] And when someone takes initiative to do it, then it becomes okay. People start in other schools to say 'why don't we do just like that?'So when someone approaches us , we'd be like, 'Okay, the rest of the schools are doing it..'" (Bassem, *Schools Network* - Align efforts)

On navigating parental resistance, the teachers shared insights on how the content of any SHP effort should be scientific to avoid skepticism from governing entities or families fearing the individual teachers' improvisations. A whole school approach as mentioned in (School Culture C3.2) can support teachers to navigate parental resistance. Engagement with the *Families* through awareness sessions and meetings can align them with the school and teachers' vision for SHP. Teachers also shared insights on making the connections between SHP education and the kind of adults they will be in the future whether to refrain from harassment, condemn it or respond if victimized by it. Ideas on working around parental resistance included teaching about sexism through the curriculum. The aspects of meaning here involve the macroenvironment surrounding the school culture and the teaching, and provide ideas that are worthy of implementation for less environmental resistance.

8. Discussion - Data in light of Theory

In this research, I focus on teachers to prevent sexual harassment in schools and simultaneously work to make a positive change in the Egyptian society. The main research question of this thesis is: *What are the teachers' conceptions of sexual harassment prevention in Egypt?*. This question is further broken down into parts using two sub-questions. Sub-question (A) is: *How can teachers educate for SHP?* while sub-question (B) is: *How can schools become safe from sexual harassment?*. In this chapter, I first respond to the main research question and two sub-questions in section 8.1. Next in section 8.2, I present six implications of this research which

connect teachers' conceptions and its reflection on their practice by highlighting their alignment or misalignment with literature and theoretical concepts. Following the implications, I present a recommendations section (8.3) that is also informed by the theoretical background and provides ideas that can help actualize the teachers' potential and role in SHP.

8.1 Discussion of the Research Questions

In response to the main research question, the teachers shared their conceptions in ways that were analysed and eventually informed three 3rd-level categories of conceptions. The first category is their conceptions of their *role in SHP* (C1). This category of conceptions (C1) involves how teachers identify with topics of sexual harassment and gender equality based on their backgrounds and their motivation to take on teaching as a profession (C1.1). This relates to Turner's (2002) and Biddle's (1986) explanation of how the individual's understanding of their role influences their practice. The practice of teachers who understand teaching in a strictly academic sense would differ from teachers who recognize social justice and social emotional learning as parts of the teacher's role (Ryu et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2014). Teachers in this research who recognize themselves as social justice educators are considered to be change agents (Francis & Le Roux, 2011; Heijden et al., 2018; Picower, 2015). The conception of the teachers' role also involves their relationships with the students (C1.2). The theme of a teacher's relationships with the students emerged across different concepts including feminist pedagogy (Schoeman, 2015), anti-oppressive pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2000), and the caring teacher by Noddings (2012). The teachers in this thesis however, referred to their relationships with the students in ways that closely fit with Noddings's description (2012) of a caring teacher who pays attention to the students' needs and empathizes with them. The third part of the teachers' conceptions of their role in SHP is the extent of their awareness of sexual harassment (C1.3). According to Francis and Le Roux (2011) and Fields (2007), teachers need to have knowledge of gender inequality topics in order to address it in the classrooms. This aligns with the findings from the teachers' conceptions where the awareness they individually have about sexual harassment, sexism and gender inequality informs the view of their role in SHP (C1.4). The teachers also described their classroom interactions in a way that reflects parts of their conceptions of their role in SHP. Similar to relationships with students, classroom interactions are also described in literature on feminist pedagogy (McCusker, 2017; Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999; Schoeman, 2015), anti-oppressive pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2000) and caring classrooms (Noddings, 1984; 2012). The classroom interactions described by teachers in this research that reflect their conceptions

of their role involve challenging gender bias, addressing social issues and monitoring the students' behaviors to ensure a respectful classroom community. These themes are parts of the six principles of feminist pedagogy that aims towards a respectful classroom community that tackles sexism (Schoeman, 2015), anti-oppressive pedagogy that addresses social issues and challenges assumptions (Heringer, 2020; Kumashiro, 2000), and caring classrooms where morals of empathy and respect are valued and nurtured (Noddings, 2012). Simultaneously, it was apparent that part of the teachers' conceptions of their role in SHP was being formed from participating in this research by engaging in discussions in their school settings with peers and students, or by doing some independent research about the topic (C1.5). Participating in this research is only an occurrence of engagement with the topic of SHP in schools, it does not equate with teacher education programs or professional development courses that can thoroughly address the topic. The research however, prompted teachers to examine their assumptions and raise their awareness about their role towards SHP. This aligns with Woodrow and Caruana's explanation (2017) of how perspective transformation gradually occurs through teacher education opportunities that address their change agency.

In addition to their role, the teachers also shared conceptions that reflect their understanding of *environmental factors* that enable or hinder their potential towards SHP (C2). The teachers seemed to instinctively relate to Butin's (2002) view that they can neither oppress nor liberate on their own but are rather influenced by their contexts. The teachers talked about the parents' attitudes towards occurrences of sexual harassment or efforts of SHP (C2.1). This links well with the several literature that discuss the parents' negative attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health education of resistance and objection (Geel, 2012; Roushdy, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). The teachers also frequently referred to religious and cultural aspects of the larger society that influence their capacity to address SHP (C2.2). Truly, the literature about sexual harassment prevention in Egypt all bring up the stigmatization and sensitivity of the topic which leads to reluctance towards dialogue or preventive efforts (ECWR, 2009; FIDH, Nazra, NWF & UWAW, 2014; Geel, 2012; Roushdy, 2013). Finally, part of the teachers' conceptions of the environment that surrounds them in SHP, involved the will and attitude of their school's leadership (C2.3). Geel (2012) and Roushdy (2013) both emphasized that the reluctance is not only shown by parents but is also present amongst educators in Egypt where principals refrain from collaborating with public health professionals or cancel content that involves the word sex. Also in international literature, Sanchez et al. (2001) and Shakeshaft (2018) associate the passiveness of school leaders to unknowing the ways to approach the topic of sexual

harassment. While responding to the main research question related most with 2 of the 3 3rd-level categories (C1) and (C2), responding to sub-questions (A) and (B) connects more with the 3rd 3rd-level category (C3).

In response to sub-question (A) exploring the teachers' conceptions of *educating for SHP*, teachers provided *ideas for SHP* in schools (C.3) that involve their teaching. Teaching as an idea for SHP aligns with Carmody et al. (2009) explanation of primary levels of prevention where proactive efforts occur to prevent occurrences of harassment and transform harassment cultures. Teachers' ideas involved potential practice and curriculum in the classroom (C3.1). Some of their ideas described teaching that aligns well with themes of feminist pedagogy such as monitoring and addressing sexism at school, challenging the gender biases of students and school procedures, and committing to a feminist interpretation of the curriculum (Fields, 2007; Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999). Other ideas of teaching for SHP involved cross-curricular integration where teachers further actualize their responsibility to teach students about the dangers of sexual harassment and ways in which they can be safe. As long as a subject of sex education remains absent from the curriculum, the teachers want to retain and improve the cross-curricular approach to SHP. The cross-curricular approach aligns well with the available research in Egypt which presents approving views of families and educators towards incorporating elements of sex education in subjects such as science, religion, and civic education (Geel, 2012; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013). Sex education is also talked about as part of the teachers' conceptions of their ideas to teach for SHP. Teachers in this research shared a variation of attitudes and views towards sex education. This is similar to Geel's description (2012) of the variation among teachers' opinions regarding the need and sufficiency of sexuality education at schools. The teachers in my research however, all emphasized that a sex education curriculum must take the context of Egyptian culture and religion into consideration. This is as well a common notion in available literature on sex education in Egypt (ECWR, 2009; Geel, 2012; Roushdy, 2013; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012).

In response to sub-question (B) about the teachers' conceptions of *school safety from sexual harassment*, teachers expressed more *ideas for SHP* in schools (C.3). Alongside teaching (C3.1), their ideas that address the safety of the environment involve improved changes to the school culture (C3.2) and engaging the community outside of schools (C3.3). In parts of their conceptions regarding school safety from sexual harassment, teachers emphasized that the school culture must improve (C3.2). The teachers understand that the school culture teaches a parallel implicit curriculum that can be more forceful in reproducing gender biases, inequality

and violence than their individual agency can mitigate (Leach et al., 2003; Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997; Rinehart & Espelage, 2016). Teachers understand a cooperative school culture that can help them work towards SHP to be explicit in its harassment intolerance, committed to creating safe space, and enforcing strict policies. Strict policies and school procedures as part of the school's leadership commitment to SHP aligns with the secondary level of prevention (Carmody et al., 2009). The culture of a safe space is also described by Griffin (2018), Inlay (2016) and Noddings (1984) in order to create a respectful school community. The teachers however have not expressed conceptions of ideas for SHP that are about tertiary level prevention where school leaders and teachers engage in evaluative, restorative, and post-harassment efforts to prevent repeated cases (Carmody et al., 2009).

Interestingly, the conceptions of SHP that are shared by teachers to respond to the research questions reflect Rinehart and Espelage's (2016) five aspects of the school environment that impact sexual harassment. In line with the first aspect, the teachers' conceptions address the *school's will to acknowledge sexual harassment* (C2.3). The teachers also talk about the second aspect which involves *the school community and its collective commitment to address sexual harassment* (C3.2). In a similar notion, the teachers bring up the third aspect which involves the *school leadership's engagement,* or reluctance to engage, with the topic (C2.3) and *prioritizing a safe environment* (C3.2). The fourth aspect of *positive relationships and engagement of community members* was mentioned by teachers who emphasized involving families and collaborating with neighboring schools (C3.3). Partnerships with families was also recommended by Griffin (2018) to navigate parents' resistance and promote similar values at home and schools The final aspect explained by Rinehart and Espelage (2016), which teachers have not mentioned yet implied in their conceptions of school culture (C3.2), is a perceived *dedication by the school environment towards gender equality*.

In summary, the main research question exploring the teachers' conceptions of SHP in schools can be briefly answered by their insights about their *role* as teachers (C1) in regards to their background and teaching motivation, relationships with the students, and awareness of sexual harassment. The main research question is also answered by how teachers describe the surrounding *environment* of parents, society and school leadership (C2) to encourage, or discourage them, from changing and actualizing their role towards social change and SHP. Sub-question A is answered by the teachers' *ideas* (C3) on their teaching towards SHP while sub-question B is answered by the teachers' *ideas* on how the entire school culture and external community can work in alignment for SHP. The ideas from *teaching* for SHP (C3.1) complemented

by the ideas of improving the *school culture* (C3.2) and *engaging the community* (C3.3), work together towards a common vision for SHP in schools and society. The ideas (C3) shared by teachers as part of their conceptions of SHP in schools complete their conceptions of their role (C1) and the environment (C2). Together, the three 3rd-level categories form the entirety of the teachers' conceptions of SHP in schools as shared by the teachers in this research.

8.2 Implications of the Research

The implications in this section connect to the main research question in exploring the teachers' conceptions of SHP in schools. The implications capture teaching strategies, attitudes and emotions as described and implied by teachers during the interviews. The following implications can therefore be considered as a summarized layout of the collective conceptions reflected by teachers towards SHP in schools, their role in it, and their attitudes towards it.

1. *Teachers are aware of sexual harassment as an independent phenomenon*

Through the interviews, it became apparent that most of the teachers define and discuss sexual harassment as an independent phenomenon of violence. Only four of the fourteen teachers implied or made explicit references to gender inequality and sexism as a broader structure that enables sexual harassment. Although the teachers have shown elaborate awareness of sexual harassment to include verbal, digital, nonverbal gestures and physical forms, they are yet to broaden this awareness to include sexual harassment being an escalation of gender-based violence in society. The awareness of sexual harassment, the climate that tolerates it and the complexities surrounding it relates to how teachers conceptualize their role in preventing or combating it through their work (Fields, 2007; Francis & Le Roux, 2011). In line with Fields (2007), teachers therefore need to acquire gender and sexuality knowledge to be able to combat sexism confidently.

2. *Teachers understand their role on a subject-oriented and safeguarding spectrum*

Depending on personal interests and backgrounds, the teachers' understanding of their role varies. Turner (2002) and Biddle (1986) both emphasized that the way in which teachers understand their role informs their teaching and relationships at school. In this light, it was interesting to observe that those who became teachers partially or entirely for social change, were more aware and engaged with the topic of sexual harassment, and with social issues in general. Some of the teachers' understanding of their role seemed entirely subject-oriented where they only

assumed responsibility of safeguarding the students in case a situation presents itself. Other teachers in this research, particularly teachers of primary age students, understand their safeguarding responsibility to involve explicit teaching for SHP and being highly attentive of children's wellbeing. The teachers in this research explained their role as mostly located on a spectrum of teaching about sexual harassment to prevent its occurence or have shown no direct relevance to SHP at all. Only two teachers have clearly articulated their role to involve changing society through teaching their students about inequality, sexism and oppression by facilitating discussions and challenging the students' ideas (Francis & Le Roux, 2011; Heijden et al., 2018; Picower, 2015; Schoeman, 2015). Neutrality towards sexual harassment by school staff members that look the other way or perceive it as misbehavior enables further harassment (Leach & Mitchell, 2006; Rinehart & Espelage, 2016; Robinson, 2005; Sunnari et al., 2003; Wessler & Preble, 2003). Thus, teachers need to extend the understanding of their role as one that prioritizes looking out for sexual harassment cases or harassment-tolerant attitudes.

3. *Teachers can demonstrate acts of feminist pedagogy instinctively*

None of the teachers referred to feminist pedagogy explicitly in the interviews, yet themes of feminist pedagogy such as a feminist interpretation of the curriculum and incorporating work by women were demonstrated by few teachers (Crawley et al., 2008; Middlecamp & Subramaniam, 1999; Schoeman, 2015). These teachers were either proactively addressing social issues with feminist discourses in mind, or reacting to occurrences and opinions they perceive as problematic. In line with recommendations by Middlecamp and Subramaniam (1999) and Crawley et al. (2008), some of the teachers interviewed incorporate content that is by or about women in a pedagogical effort to be inclusive and empowering of girls. Similar to the teachers in the research who have shown practices of feminist pedagogy, Mcleod (1998) recommends encouraging these efforts as they raise awareness amongst students on gender equality. Additionally, few of the teachers mentioned in their interviews that they start their classroom discussions by asking questions about the content to prompt their thinking which is another recommended approach by Crawley et al. (2008). In regard to the previously listed feminist orientations to teaching, the teachers in this research who demonstrated acts of feminist pedagogy fit into the liberal and critical orientations (Jones, 2011 as cited in Ollis, 2017). Teachers who shared examples of addressing gender inequality or sexual harassment were in alignment with the liberal orientation which extracts and challenges the students' views, and the critical orientation which intentionally plans to center topics of equality.

4. *Teachers are skeptical of resisting and actualizing their change agency potential*

The teachers in this research expressed concerns about the extent of their capacity to address controversial topics in the classroom. In relevance to Butin's statement (2002), teachers cannot significantly liberate solely by their individual efforts. Culture and society dominate in a school setting through the attitudes of the school leadership, colleagues alignment or criticism, and parents' response (Leach et al., 2003; Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997; Rinehart & Espelage, 2016). The teachers who were encouraged by the school leadership to discuss SHP felt confident in their approach given that all of the other teachers within the same school are doing the same. An aligned school culture with a clear position towards sexual harassment inspires teachers to bring its vision to practice (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 2997). The school leadership that adopts a whole-school approach to SHP allows teachers to recognize sexual harassment as important, and feel supported by the management in the occurrence of a case.

5. *Teachers contribute to SHP individually or through a whole-school program*

The teachers' efforts for SHP in this research were either done individually or through a whole-school approach. The teachers who address sexual harassment individually have the background knowledge or personal interest in the issue, but can be faced by a passive school leadership (Hyde et al., 2011; Leaf & Keys, 2005). These teachers however must abide by the school's leadership, and simultaneously try to start relevant discussions with the students but only if it can be wrapped in the curriculum. On the other hand, teachers who educate for SHP as per the school's instructions, abide by what the school leadership has designed and expects them to deliver, be it an awareness session or a unit about safety. These teachers transmit the information as set by the school's leadership and continue to look out for harassment throughout the school year. In line with Rinehart and Espelage (2016), the teachers in this research can clearly understand the implicit curriculum reflected in their school's culture attitude towards sexual harassment through its explicit communication and the school leaders' willingness to respond to cases.

6. *Teachers believe in the value of sex education but are concerned with criticism*

The teachers in this research believe in the value of sex education as integrated within the mainstream curriculum or as an independent subject. The teachers have explained different attitudes towards the feasibility and applicability of sex education in the Egyptian context even in international schools where most of them are currently employed. The teachers shared different imaginaries to sex education and expressed skepticism of sex education enforcing ideas that

contradict with the Egyptian conservative values that some of them personally hold. This can be understood in light of how teachers understand the role of schools to indoctrinate one set of values and norms to all students (Heringer, 2020). In a more liberated view of schooling, the students would be encouraged to acquire unbiased knowledge and make the decisions that align with the parenting they received and their values as adults. The schools are expected by society and parents however to reproduce the same social structure and transmit the same attitudes and behaviors to students without disrupting the status quo (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-Kollia, 2019). Gender inequality as a result of patriarchy however requires institutions and individuals who are dedicated to resist and dismantle these structures courageously (Fields, 2007; Heringer, 2020; Kumashiro, 2000; Mcleod, 1998). Some of the teachers explained that only sex education content that teaches about personal space, private body parts and reporting channels in case of harassment should be delivered at school. Other aspects of sex education such as consent in sexual interactions, sexuality, reproductive health or relationship dynamics were perceived as unnecessary for SHP. Those reluctant teachers worry that these dimensions to sex education can be received by the students and parents as an invitiation to engage in sexual relationships when it is supposedly forbidden. These views align with previous literature on sex education in Egypt that also present reluctant attitudes towards the subject and emphasis of a context-sensitive imaginary (ECWR. 2009; Geel, 2012; Roushdy, 2013; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). In addressing some of the above stated implications, the recommendations in the next section include designing a context sensitive sex education curriculum in addition to other necessary actions to take SHP at schools forward.

8.3 Recommendations

Upon exploration of literature and the outcome space, recommendations can be presented to bridge the distance between the theory in academic sources and reality of teachers' conceptions. The recommendations in this section include teacher education efforts, national policies that oblige SHP, and a context-sensitive sex education curriculum. Each of the mentioned three recommendations were inspired by the teachers' insights and simultaneously supported by academic sources.

My first recommendation is the inclusion of gender and sexuality knowledge in teacher education programmes, and through in-service training for all the current teachers. In their teaching

and efforts to change the mindsets of their students towards girls and incidents of sexual harassment, teachers need an understanding of root causes, surroundings and the cultural components that allow sexual harassment. For teachers to fully recognize the explicit and subtle forms of gender-based violence that occurs at schools, including sexual harassment, they need to learn about gender and sexuality (Fields, 2007; Francis & Le Roux, 2011). The teachers need to acquire the foundational knowledge on topics of social justice including schools as sites of gender-based violence. Through having research-based knowledge of gender inequality, the teachers can change their view of their role to involve a social justice dimension (Sunnari et al., 2003). The teachers can then incorporate their theorized understanding to inform their teaching and defend their practice as needed. The teachers can also move on from their gender and sexuality education feeling more confident in their competencies to deliver a sex education curriculum and incorporate themes of feminist pedagogy in their classroom environment.

The second recommendation is that the government obliges educational institutions to prevent sexual harassment through creating and enforcing national policies. In order for teacher education programs and school policies to emphasize gender equality, the government needs to design educational policies on gender equality and sexual harassment. National policies will thus oblige schools to incorporate sexual harassment prevention in their policies and curriculum. Since the school's vision is affected by the state's ideology which in turn affects teaching (Dedotsi & Paraskevopoulou-kollia, 2019), national policies can encourage the schools' vision to include sexual harassment. Teachers can then feel more confident to defend their practice and understand the framework set by the state to which they can accurately follow, or further extend. Having national policies that address gender equality in schools including sexual harassment can oblige schools to create a gender equality plan and policies to report and prevent sexual harassment (Granskog et al., 2018). The policies will invite schools to rethink their role in light of social justice. If schools design a whole-school vision, document policies and dedicate resources for SHP, then teachers will recognize their individual roles to work to combat sexual harassment as change agents. It is however important to recognize that teachers are not neutral individuals. To imply that all teachers are willing to combat sexism and prevent sexual harassment can be naive (Butin, 2002). The teachers have grown up within the same society that maintains the patriarchal social structure in addition to learning in the same education system which they work within. According to O'Sullivan (2008), the teachers are outcomes of the same system. It is therefore important to recognize that teachers, men and women included, hold their own values, biases and skepticism. Teachers are not blank canvas that are waiting to

be educated about gender inequality and oppression where they instantly accept feminist discourses and embrace the will to combat sexism in their teaching or prioritize SHP. Most teachers would agree in principle to their responsibility of ensuring the students safety, including keeping girls safe from sexual harassment. Yet in practice, there are likely teachers, like in all walks of Egyptian society, who engage in victim blaming and spread skepticism about believing victims, or show reluctance to enforce strict consequential measures.

The third recommendation is that the Ministry of Education develops a sex education curriculum. In regard to sex education as a tool to prevent sexual harassment and combat sexism in society, a context-sensitive curriculum is required (ECWR, 2009; Geel, 2012; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012). Since parents avoid discussing sex education topics with their children (Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012), then schools can take on this responsibility of which it supposedly shares with families, religious institutions, and media (Geel, 2012; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013). Similar to some of the teachers' ideas from the interviews, available sources also recommend that a context-sensitive sex education curriculum can be divided into dimensions and integrated within the suitable subjects such as mutual respect in civic citizenship lessons, sexual and reproductive health in biology lessons and sexual behaviors in religion lessons (Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013). Another context-sensitive recommendation for sex education in the case of it being a standalone subject is to be gender sagregated in order for teachers to feel more comfortable and thus confident while also being able to meet the specific gender needs (Geel, 2012). A final context-sensitive recommendation that was implied by the teachers and confirmed by Roushdy (2013) and Geel (2012), is that a sex education curriculum would have higher chances of acceptance by parents, school leaders and students if it was given a title that does not involve the word sex. Although removing the word sex from the subject can defy the purpose of educating about sexuality, it might be a strategic first step to introduce and naturalize such a resisted sensitive topic. Different teachers have wondered during the interviews about their and their colleagues' competency to teach sex education content. Importantly then, the curriculum needs to be complemented with the professional development program that prepares the teachers to deliver it with competence (Roushdy, 2013; Sakr & Abo El Komsan, 2013; Wahba & Roudi-Fahimi, 2012).

In this chapter, my intention has been to directly respond to the research question by presenting the teachers' conceptions of sexual harassment prevention in schools. I consider value in recognizing the different conceptions that teachers have towards SHP and their role in it, and in exploring the practical implications of their conceptions. The implications provide a tangible

manifestation to the teachers' conceptions by taking forms of concerns, teaching methods, reluctance or silence in their practice. The recommendations that follow therefore, aim to bridge the distance between their conceptions and the theory as well as between their conceptions and their practice. In the following chapter, I move forward from the phenomenon of sexual harassment prevention, and shift the focus from teachers to myself as a researcher reflecting on the research and the research process.

9. Further Reflections

In this chapter, I reflect on the research process as an integral step in conducting qualitative research (Mortari, 2015). It is necessary for my learning process as an emerging researcher to recognize the limitations of this research, and to bring attention towards further possibilities to extend this work. I then present ways in which this research contributes to the field of gender in education. and reflect on the quality of the research by examining aspects of trustworthiness. At the end of the chapter, I review the ethical choices made throughout the research process

9.1 Limitations

I recognize the limitations not only of the research process but also of the recommendations mentioned in the previous chapter. The limitations include acknowledging my subjectivity as the researcher, recognizing the absence of public school teachers as participants, and addressing a knowledge gap on teacher education in Egypt particularly in the areas of gender and social justice.

While I have discussed bracketing as important for phenomenography in chapter 5, I also mentioned the importance of being transparent about parts of oneself that are challenging to entirely bracket (Given, 2012). I recognize the possibility of my subjectivity as an Egyptian woman who adopts feminist ideas and has experiences as a teacher from the same context. In order to check any of my subjectivity from influencing the research process, I tried to the best of my abilities to be conscious of the language I use during the interviews and to ask questions in an open-ended way that avoids manipulation. Throughout the data collection process, I was honest and straightforward about the research topic. The only critical tone was apparent in condemning sexual harassment itself. It was clear throughout the participation call and the interviews that I address sexual harassment as an issue and not neutrally. For example, while asking the teachers

about their understanding of sexual harassment, their role and potential at schools, I refrained from making comments or gestures that reveal my orientation towards the topic or show judgement over their responses.

Saturation aims at capturing the entire range of variations of conceptions of a phenomenon (Townsend, 2013). As discussed priorly, sexual harassment is prevalent throughout society and is mirrored at schools through harassment-tolerant culture and stigmatization. The thread on @AssaultPolice has shown that girls and women were sharing similarly severe experiences with sexual harassment at public, private and international schools. Public schools however usually have less resources, more students, and less autonomy to enforce strict consequences in cases of misconduct due to their highly centralized structure making firing teachers or expelling students more complicated. Teaching at public schools can influence how public school teachers perceive their role, especially that public schools are often associated with a higher working load and pressures than private and international school teachers. The environment for SHP can also differ from the environment described by private and international school teachers. The difference can be in the relationships between the school leaders and the parents since private and international schools are often more concerned with the parents' response as fee-paying customers. The focus of this research is on the ways that teachers from varying school systems and of different age groups perceive their role and potential in SHP. Therefore, all groups of teachers were invited and encouraged to participate. Approaching the time scheduled for interviewing, it became apparent that no public school teachers have serious willingness to participate and the time frame for this research could not allow for further recruitment of participants. I therefore chose to proceed with the participants available and reflect on the absence of public school teachers at the end of the research process.

The discussion in the previous chapter emphasizes the need for improved teacher education on SHP. I however acknowledge a limitation to the recommendations presented earlier due to my lack of knowledge on existing teacher education curricula. The teachers in this research have acquired their teacher education and professional development qualifications individually. Teachers in private and international schools do not receive centralized teacher education like public school teachers. The teachers in this research have bachelor's degrees in various fields and later acquired further qualifications to certify their teaching status. The curricula of these qualifications vary according to specialty and location of university. While the teachers who studied their masters or postgraduate certificate abroad might have engaged with notions of

social justice in education, the teachers who completed degrees in Egypt have unlikely addressed these topics. More importantly, the private and international school teachers remain to be a small percentage since private and international schools are approximately 8,000 out of 53,000 schools in Egypt (Hossam, 2018). The majority of teachers receive their teacher education bachelor's degree from the faculties of education of different public universities across the country. Through a preliminary internet search of the curricula of these faculties, there was no gender in education courses listed on the programmes' webpages. There are however several pedagogical and sociology of education courses listed which some of its content might entail topics of gender. A gender analysis of teacher education curricula is hence an opportunity for further research which can provide insights on the current teacher education curricula.

9.2 Contribution to the Field

Egypt as a United Nations member state has adopted the agenda to achieve the UN SDGs 2030. The Egyptian government in alignment with the work of UN agencies and bureaus in Egypt has launched a project called Egypt Vision 2030 for Sustainable Development (UNDP, 2021). Since education and gender equality are integral to the achievement of the SDGs, this research is relevant to UN SDGs 2030 particularly goals pertaining to quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities and achieving peace and justice in institutions (Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, 2019). This work adds to the research that discusses equality in educational institutions and lifelong learning that occurs through quality education. A valuable aspect about this research is its full contextualization in Egypt, thus providing usefulness in further discussions of the issues to design recommendations and action by policymakers.

The literature review in this research highlighted that research on gender in education in Egypt is limited in both Arabic and English languages. The sources located that are especially about sexual harassment at schools are done by public health researchers and human rights research initiatives. Gender in education, with emphasis on gender-based violence such as sexual harassment, is yet to be included in the research universe of faculties of education across the country. This research contributes to the academic sources available that discuss sexual harassment at schools with a clear focus on the role of teachers in combating the phenomenon inside their schools and changing society for the better. This research contributes to the topic with centering not only the teachers' potential but their conceptions. The review of international literature included sources that discuss teachers' potential and change agency in the road to equality. This

research however presents the second-order perspective of teachers in a unique endeavor that centers their voice.

Since all research projects are committed to a timeline and scope, there is always capacity for the work to be continued by further research. In this research, I was originally interested in involving teachers and school leaders. The school leaders have different roles from teachers and would have likely shared different conceptions that require a parallel analysis process. In the preliminary stages of developing the research idea, I chose to focus only on teachers for better scope. Ideas for future research can include exploring school leaders' understanding and reflections on their role for a school culture that is effective in SHP. Future research can also capture the conceptions of public school teachers to further understand how the particularities of their school environments and the socioeconomic background of the community impact their role and efforts. Additionally, this research involves the conceptions of more women than men's (10 and 4 respectively). Research that focuses on exclusively gathering men's insights can provide interesting perspectives to gender in schools. Other ideas of research can center the students' voices, especially students who identify as transgender and gender nonconforming. Research projects that focus on students can also document their sexual harassment experiences or utilize methods to measure occurrences to highlight the severity of the issue.

9.3 Quality

Qualitative research refrains from utilizing evaluation criteria that are positivistic and more suited for quantitative methods. Instead, the quality of qualitative research is more suitably evaluated by inspecting the extent of qualitatively understood aspects such as trustworthiness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this section, I utilize different guiding literature on evaluating qualitative research. Although measuring validity and reliability are associated with evaluating quantitative research, Hajar (2020) adopts them to phenomenography in a criteria to evaluate the quality of phenomenography through two validity and two reliability aspects. The validity and reliability evaluation presented by Hajar (2020) is complemented by Marton and Booth's (1997) criteria to particularly evaluate the quality of the outcome space. Next, I respond to Hatch's questions (2002) to assess the adequacy of the qualitative research. Finally, I reflect on credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and reflexivity following Lincoln and Guba's framework for assessing trustworthiness in qualitative research (1985).

Validity according to Hajar's criteria (2020) is concerned with the extent to which the outcome space reflects the phenomenon. The first validity aspect according to the author is communicative validity which involves seeking feedback on the research methods and findings from participants and members of the academic community. In this thesis, a research plan was first presented to the thesis supervisor and discussed in addition to being discussed with three peers. Upon deciding on phenomenography as suitable for the research question and focus on teachers' conceptions, I wrote a research proposal to further plan for the theoretical component of the research and the empirical process. After receiving feedback on the research proposal by the thesis supervisor and one peer, I launched the data collection stage while simultaneously writing the introduction and literature review chapters. Throughout the interviewing stage I explained to the participants my interest in their conceptions as teachers. I have not however dwelled into the basis of my choice to avoid influencing their conceptions. In regard to feedback on research findings, the outcome space was shared with the thesis supervisor and secondary supervisor for feedback and discussion. Through the feedback, my ability to justify or further explain my interpretations and analysis process, the research acquired more validity. Seeking the teachers' feedback on the findings would have been unhelpful since each individual teacher only holds a partial understanding of the entire variation captured in the outcome space. The second validity check is pragmatic validity which entails the usefulness of the findings for the target audience. The research is useful for different groups through providing contextual understanding, an elaborate literature review and centering teachers throughout. This thesis is written for researchers, policymakers, teacher education students, school leaders and teachers. It is more likely that researchers, policymakers and teacher education students might refer to this research for their future work, rather than principals and teachers. I however perceive value for this research to inspire pedagogical changes which motivates me to create the poster and pamphlet for schools.

In terms of reliability, which is commonly used to assess quantitative research, reliability in phenomenography is checked across two aspects. Dialogic reliability as the first aspect involves participating researchers to compare and discuss their outcomes. This is only relevant in the case of more than one researcher which is inapplicable in this thesis. Alternatively, the outcome space was explained and discussed with the two thesis supervisors. Given the qualitative method of this research and my acknowledged subjectivity despite bracketing efforts, the outcome space developed by a different researcher would likely include some similarities and differences. The second reliability check involves the researcher inspection of interpretative awareness. My interpretative awareness in this thesis involves describing my positionality early

in the research process and bracketing my assumptions about participants in interpreting their individual interviews or ideas about the phenomenon in reaching the outcome space.

In evaluating the quality of the outcome space of this research, I follow Marton and Booth's criteria (1997). One criterion is that each category should be independent and shows clear relevance to the phenomenon being studied. In chapter 7 while explaining the emergence of each category, the connection between the interpreted category and the topic were presented. The second criterion emphasizes the organized relationship between the categories. In the same chapter, groups of first-level categories were discussed to show how they informed a second-level category followed by second-level categories being grouped to form a higher third-level category. The hierarchical relationships between the categories were presented and described. The third criterion is that the outcome space is concise in the amount of categories focusing on categories that capture variation rather than repetition. In the analysis stage, I was careful to assign codes to the aspects of meaning that are different from one another and to revise the grouping of higher categories several times for a logical organization.

In order to assess the adequacy of this research, here I refer and respond to Hatch's (2002) 19 guiding questions (Appendix D). I located myself in relation to the research topic and described my positionality. I explained the choice of the qualitative paradigm and my interest in understanding teachers' conceptions leading to the selection of phenomenography to understand SHP education in schools. I explained the rationale for conducting a literature review that focuses on contextual understanding of the phenomenon in Egypt, international literature on sexual harassment in schools and SHP. Concepts in the theoretical framework were presented in connection to each other and in relevance to the topic and teachers as participants. The research question is clearly articulated and fits the selected phenomenographic methodology. The context being Egyptian schools and society were described in reference to available literature alongside situating myself within it as a woman, former student, and teacher. In terms of access to context and participants, both aspects were explained as being from the context whereas participant recruitment capitalized on my social network connections as Egyptian and as a teacher. Planning and execution of the data collection stage was narrated early in chapter 6. I have been aware that saturation is an expectation in phenomenography to capture variation and referred to literature that supports the number of participants I interviewed in this size of phenomenographic study. Approaching the end, I recognize that while the number of participants is sufficient, it is the absence of public school teachers as a group that could have further added

to the variation presented. Communication with participants is recounted in chapter 6 and supported by artifacts including the participation call and the informed consent form (Appendices A and B). The participants' involvement was explained in chapter 6 during the interviewing section and their interest to engage with the final thesis as an audience was expressed in chapter 7. The 14 interviews were analysed in a systematic process that is described from interviewing in chapter 6 until the emergence of the outcome space with categories being each explained in chapter 7. In the discussion, the findings were discussed in light of responding to the research question and in connection the reviewed literature and the relevant theoretical concepts. Websites and software programs that supported me in this research process were stated such as Instagram in preliminary reference to the movement, Facebook and LinkedIn for participants recruitment, Google Forms for consent, Zoom.com for interviews, Otter.ai for transcription, and Nvivo for coding. Throughout this thesis, I embrace a first voice in narrating the process to ensure clear communication and emphasize my agency and subjectivity as a qualitative researcher.

In reference to Lincoln and Guba's framework to evaluate qualitative research for trustworthiness, five aspects are inspected (1985). The higher trustworthiness that a research proves to have, the more believable it is perceived to be. The first aspect of trustworthiness is credibility which entails the honest narration of the interpretation process which I have tried to my best ability to emphasize in the analysis section and findings chapter. The second aspect of dependability involves showing that the same set of data would result in similar findings over time. Since interviews are open for interpretation and bracketing is integral to phenomenography, I coded the interviews twice to arrive at consistent categories and ran several rounds of grouping to reach higher second and third level categories. In regard to confirmability as the third aspect, the researcher needs to prove that other people have conducted analysis of the same data and together arrive at consensus about findings. I perceive this aspect as inapplicable to the nature of this thesis since I acknowledge my subjectivity and rather respond to it by bracketing and transparency. I am the only researcher who interpreted the data, yet I demonstrated interpretive awareness by thoroughly describing the analysis process and seeking the feedback of peers and academic supervisors. The fourth aspect is transferability which involves showing ways that the findings of this thesis can be transferred to other settings or groups. The outcome space in this thesis presents the variation captured from conceptions of 14 teachers who all teach at

private and international schools in Egypt. As Egyptian teachers in schools in Egypt, their conceptions hold value for other teachers and school settings. It is thus worthwhile to explore ways that this research can be transferred to suit the public school setting and public school teachers.

The final aspect is reflexivity which involves close inspection by the researcher of their assumptions and bias. Throughout the research process, I have been aware of my presence and positionality. Without trying to claim objectivity, I addressed my stance on gender inequality and sexual harassment as a woman and teacher. I have also explicitly shared the critical feminist lens I adopt for a socially just worldview. While the call to recruit research participants was communicative of condemning sexual harassment, I refrained from selecting participants whom I perceive to share my views. I tried to recruit more than 4 male teachers for a gender balance due to the gendered nature of this topic where I predict that men share different conceptions from those shared by women. Before and during the interviews, I was conscious to use language that is neutral and ask open questions that do not presume particular responses. I paid attention to my emotions after each of the interviews in order not to allow my general impressions about the participant, or how they align with my ideas, affect the analysis. Following the recommendation by Gillam and Guillemin (2018), I would assume myself to be in the participant's position and view the communication and interview experience from their perspective. I assured the participants of their rights, encouraged questions and welcomed contact in case of further inquiries or concerns.

9.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics have been part of the thinking process throughout this research. I consider the choice of the thesis topic to be an ethical decision where I had to examine my motivation, position and interest. Sexual harassment as a phenomenon of gender-based violence and a manifestation of gender inequality is a social justice issue. The topic holds within it values of equality, respect, autonomy, agency and safety as freedom. My intention for this research is to motivate action towards gender equality in educational settings, particularly combating sexual harassment and eventually sexism in schools by teachers. The topic was inspired by the recent movement of women against sexual harassment and gender inequality in Egypt. I thus consider this thesis to be not only a learning process but also an act of academic activism. In stating my intentions by conducting this research, I add to the integrity of the work (Given, 2012). Reflexivity as an aspect of quality was discussed in the previous section. It is however important to emphasize

that reflexivity is also an ethical notion. A commitment to reflexivity dictated that I self-examine any biases or interest in choosing to include or leave out groups, theories, sources and participants.

In a standard approach to conducting ethical research, I followed the thesis supervisor's guidance and the University of Oulu guidelines for ethical practices. Since my data collection involved meeting with participants for interviews, I had a responsibility to ensure that the participants were aware of their rights through seeking their informed consent (Atkins & Wallace, 2015; Given, 2012). The teachers have all participated in this research voluntarily and willingly. They were sent an online informed consent form (Appendix B) prior to the interview to read, ask questions, fill in and sign or decline participation. The informed consent form involved introducing myself as the researcher, information about the master's programme and the name of my thesis supervisor. The form also included the research topic, the research purpose, the rights of the participant, and my contact information. I referred to the template provided by the faculty that is approved by University of Oulu's ethical committee in listing the participant's rights and providing links to official websites that further explain research ethics in Finland. At the end of the form, each participant marks their consent to different ways of using the data and fills in their contact information.

Another ethical standard in qualitative research is ensuring the anonymity of the participants (Given, 2012). The teachers in the participation call and the informed consent form were promised anonymity. Anonymity is a standard code in any research that involves participants unless the participants desire and agree to be declared in unique research methodologies. In the case of this thesis, even when the participant has shown indifference towards their anonymity, I was aware of a professional responsibility to protect their privacy and to demonstrate fair treatment of all participants. Acts for anonymity involved not talking about who my participants are nor sharing their insights with anyone. Additionally, I have given each teacher a pseudonym name in order to use excerpts from their interviews anonymously. Some of the teachers mentioned names of their schools or principals or students amidst talking. In order to protect their personal identity, I did not mention or quote such details.

It is worth noting that the practice of reflection in order to write this chapter helped me articulate my learning process. I enjoyed this step of allocating time and attention for self-evaluation. In the process of reflection, I noticed different points coming together, connecting and flowing in

a way that shows the familiarity I acquired in the past year about the context, topic, methodology and about this specific research process. For this learning opportunity, I am grateful.

10 Conclusion

The recent digital women's movement that was sparked by @AssaultPolice on Instagram in 2020 has shed light on sexual harassment at schools and sex education in Egypt. Through this thesis, I uncover the connection between the role of teachers in sexual harassment prevention in schools and Egyptian society at large. I address the significance of this research to achieving Egypt's commitment to SDGs 2030 agenda with relevance to educational quality, gender equality, reduced inequalities and peace and justice in schools as institutions. While the focus of the research has been on teachers, the research question sought to specifically explore their conceptions of SHP in schools. Through responding to the research questions, I aim to capture the variation in teachers' conceptions of SHP, with particular attention to how they perceive their role in it. The findings present the teachers' conceptions of SHP in schools to involve their role, the environment that surrounds them, and their ideas towards a future of SHP. The findings show that the teachers' awareness of sexual harassment lacks connection to broader issues of gender inequality. Teachers perceive their role in SHP as a safeguarding responsibility rather than a step towards enacting social change. Teachers educate for SHP by following the school's guidance, or by independently following their values. Some teachers demonstrate acts of feminist pedagogy instinctively, without recognizing it as pedagogy. Teachers are skeptical of actualizing their change agency beyond the school's interest in change. Finally, teachers believe in the value of sex education but have concerns over its feasibility.

In several ways, writing this thesis has brought me closer to myself and to the person I would like to become in the future. As an Egyptian woman, my motivation to combat sexual harassment and contribute to the women's movement of 2020 inspired the topic. The literature I explored and conversations I engaged with, have helped equip me with a broader understanding of gender inequality. As a teacher who has been out of the classroom for two years to study this master's programme, I reflected on my teaching practice in retrospect and revisited the extent of actualizing my own potential and change agency. If I am to teach in the future, my capacity to resist and justify my practice in combating sexism will be influenced by the Education and Globalisation master's programme and supported by this thesis. As an emerging researcher, the thesis writing process provided me with a chance to practice qualitative research skills in a

hands-on approach. Although I previously studied research methods courses, the practical experience of having to develop a full thesis brings all previous learning to life. I now feel more confident and better prepared to take on further research projects to grow in the area of social justice in education where I also look forward to exploring different qualitative methodologies. I am hoping that by conducting this research, gender in education inspires other researchers and continues to be part of the discussions around school improvement and pedagogy in Egypt. Especially in this time when Egyptian society is experiencing a forceful women's movement that will continue to evolve, educators in schools should locate themselves within this movement and take part. By staying up to date with societal changes, the educational experience can become more sustainable and relevant to students. As a human being, my hope is to continue to condemn social injustices and violence in all its forms. I want to continue to engage with work that utilizes my set of skills in line with my values of equality, peace and respect. Education has great potential in teaching these values and can help teach future generations about their power for change. I was inspired by this quote about non-violence in education where Muller (2002) says "It is when we, as humans become aware of the inhumanity of violence, of its absurdity and pointlessness, that we discover within ourselves a demand for non-violence, the basis and organising principle of our humanity" (p.61). To this sentiment I too agree that education has the power to bring awareness to injustices that children will go into the world wholeheartedly refusing and equipped to resist.

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Appendix A: Call for Participation

Attention educators in Egypt who want to help bring change and make schools a safer environment!

Dear friends in the education field,

In the ongoing movement against sexual assault, more victims are sharing their experiences of sexual harassment at schools. There is a growing consensus that schools must do all they can to be a safer environment for children and adolescents. Schools need policies and educational programs for both prevention and intervention. This change shall begin with teachers and leaders who are willing to engage in the conversation about sexual assault prevention.

I am looking for teachers and school leaders/principals to participate in a study (my master's thesis) about sexual assault prevention in schools. Briefly, the research aims to discuss sexual harassment prevention in schools and provide contextual considerations for policies and practice.

If you're interested in meeting online for a 30-45 mins interview, I would highly appreciate it and it would help the research a lot! Please leave a comment expressing your interest or send me a private message.

*Experienced teachers from different stages and subjects are invited to participate with openness to share opinions, think out loud and engage with the topic.

*Participants remain anonymous, only represent themselves as education professionals and do not represent their workplace.

*If you are familiar with violence prevention professionals, please put me in contact

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed consent for participating in research

This informed consent form provides you as a research participant general information about the research, its purpose and your rights as a participant.
General information

I am Naela Elmehrek, a master's student in the Education and Globalisation international programme at the Faculty of Education, University of Oulu. As a part of my studies, I am conducting a research in the role of schools in sexual harassment prevention. The purpose of my research is to explore how teachers and school leaders understand their role in sexual harassment prevention. I kindly request your consent for collecting information from you for the research purpose by interviewing.

All information will be used anonymously, respecting your dignity. No personal details that enable identifying you will be included in the analyses and reporting. Systematic care in handling and storing the information will be ensured to avoid any kind of harm to you. After all the information leading to identification of a person has been removed, the information will be archived electronically to be accessed by the researcher only following the guidelines of the Finnish Social Sciences Data Archive).

Voluntary participation
Your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences. Observe that information collected before your withdrawal may be used. You have the right to get information about the research and may contact me if you have questions.

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This thesis research is supervised by:
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More information about research ethics and informed consent:
Finnish Board on Research Integrity
http://www.tenk.fi/en/ethical-review-in-human-sciences
Social Sciences Data Archive
http://www.fsd.uta.fi/aineistonhallinta/en/informing-research-participants.html#partIV-examples-of-informing-research-participants
http://www.fsd.uta.fi/aineistonhallinta/en/anonymisation-and-identifiers.html

* Required

Confirming Informed Consent *

- [ ] I am willing to participate in the research.
- [ ] I allow the use of the interview for research purposes.
- [ ] I allow the information that I have provided to be archived for further research use.
- [ ] I allow the interview to be audio recorded for the research process

Date *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

Name *

Your answer

Email *

Your answer

Submit

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Appendix C: Interview Questions

- Can you talk briefly about yourself as an individual and educator?
- How and why have you become a school teacher?
- How many years in total have you worked at schools? Which would you say is your subject/age group specialization?
- In your opinion, what is the societal role of schools?
- How do you understand the social responsibility of teaching?
- In your opinion, what is the role of teachers?
- How do you understand your current role in terms of social change/change in society?
- How do you understand sexual harassment?
- What do you think is the school's role in combating sexual harassment?
- What do you think is the teacher's role in combating sexual harassment?
- How do you perceive the teacher's role in early childhood versus adolescent education regarding sexual harassment?
- Can you share a story of a response or action towards sexual harassment?
- What do you perceive as potential for schools in combating sexual harassment?
- What do you perceive as challenges or barriers facing schools and teachers in combating sexual harassment?
- How can schools be safe from sexual harassment that can occur at school?
- How do you perceive sex education's potential in combating sexual harassment or changing society?
- What are the challenges and barriers facing sex education?

Appendix D: Qualitative Research Adequacy Questions by Hatch (2002)

1. Has the researcher located himself or herself in relation to particular qualitative paradigms?
2. Has the researcher selected appropriate qualitative research approaches, given his or her paradigm choices?
3. Has the researcher described his or her methodological and substantive theory bases?
4. Has the researcher articulated a set of research questions that make sense given his or her methodological and substantive theories?
5. Has the researcher described the research context and provided a rationale for why the context was selected?
6. Has the researcher described how access and entry were negotiated?
7. Has the researcher described procedures for selecting participants and establishing working relationships with them?
8. Has the researcher described and justified participants' level of involvement in the various phases of the study?
9. Has the researcher described all of the data collected as part of the study?
10. Has the researcher made it clear how and when the data were collected?
11. Has the researcher made the case that the data are sufficient to answer research questions and appropriate given the paradigmatic framework and methodological orientation of the study?
12. Has the researcher explained and justified data analysis procedures used in the study, making it clear how and when data were analyzed?
13. Has the researcher applied data analysis procedures that are systematic and rigorous?
14. If utilized, has the researcher spelled out the role of computer programs in supporting his or her data analysis?
15. Has the researcher argued convincingly that his or her data analysis makes sense given the paradigm, methods, data, and research questions of the study?
16. Has the researcher made clear connections between his or her findings and relevant theory and previous research?
17. Has the researcher demonstrated how his or her findings are supported by the data of the study?
18. Has the researcher written his or her report using a narrative form that communicates findings clearly?
19. Has the researcher presented findings that flow logically from his or her paradigmatic assumptions, methodological orientation, research questions, data, and analysis?